

THE TIMES

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'Wise men' would be abolished

Brown plans independence for the Bank

By PHILIP WEBSTER
AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

GORDON BROWN will today announce the first steps a Labour government would take towards creating an independent Bank of England.

He intends to change the personalised links between the Governor and Chancellor that created the so-called Ken and Eddie show, and to scrap the independent panel of "wise men and women".

Instead, he wants to set up two new bodies to give him a much broader range of advice: a monetary policy committee, chaired by the Governor, which would formulate the Bank's advice, and a council of economic advisers to work with the Treasury.

The reforms are seen as an essential prelude to changes that could lead to an independent Bank that sets interest rates to meet inflation targets laid down by the government. But it is clear that the Bank would be on trial in the early Labour years. A source close to the Shadow Chancellor said: "We will not consider moving forward towards independence until these reforms are in place and the Bank has established a good track record of advice. This is Lab-

**Blair's plans for
No 10 top team**

If Labour wins the election, Tony Blair wants to ensure that his office will be in control of the government machine. The key to his success would be a No 10 team to keep a check on Whitehall departments Page 6

Leading article, page 19

our dipping its toe in the water of independence, but these reforms are needed quickly to stabilise the position between the Bank and the Chancellor."

Mr Brown is understood to have agreed the new monetary policy committee in private talks with senior Bank officials. It would comprise the Governor and his deputy, two executive directors responsible for monetary policy and three or four acknowledged experts from outside, who would become full-time Bank employees on three or four-year contracts. Both the Governor and I will be committed to ensuring these appointments are made on the basis of reputation and expertise." Mr Brown will say.

He will also attack the personalising of the relationship between Kenneth Clarke and Eddie George as being deeply damaging. "The fact that the making of monetary policy has descended into a running dispute between the Chancellor and the Bank of England, often conducted through the media, is one reason why we have not achieved sufficient credibility and are now paying the price of higher long-term interest rates and lower investment."

Mr Brown will go on to accuse Conservatives of misusing the panel of independent forecasters known as the "wise men and women" and say that the idea has run its course. Instead, Labour would set up a council reflecting a much wider range of expertise to advise the Chancellor on monetary policy and other matters in which the Treasury has a direct interest.

Today's speech will emphasise throughout Labour's commitment to low inflation, and Mr Brown will promise to match the Government's target of 2.5 per cent.

But Mr Clarke yesterday claimed that there was a £1.2 billion "black hole" in Labour's spending calculations that would mean higher taxation and borrowing. The Chancellor said that Labour's promises were incredible because Mr Brown had not committed himself to some of the Conservatives' revenue-raising measures and had overestimated our income.

Opposition to the privatisation programme would deprive a Labour government of £1.5 billion, and the release of £2.5 billion of council money could not be counted within public spending calculations.

Mr Clarke said: "A windfall tax on privatised utilities would not cover the cost of Labour's planned youth training programme, and other items had been omitted from spending and borrowing figures, including £1.8 billion to extend student loans and £640 million for school repairs."

Peter Riddell, page 8

Sleaze purge cuts MPs' outside cash

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND ANDREW PIERCE

THE Commons purge on sleaze has produced a sharp fall in the amount of outside earnings divulged by MPs. It was disclosed last night.

The second register of MPs' outside financial interests to be published since the introduction of tougher rules shows a reduction of more than £300,000 in declared earnings. However, doubt was cast over MPs' interpretation of the new rules, when the Commons disciplinary watchdog called for a review of the way

the guidelines were followed. Tory MPs in particular have cut the amount of outside income declared in the register, disclosing about £2 million compared with some £2.3 million last year. Labour's declared earnings are under £500,000, compared with £600,000 last year.

For the second year, Roy Hattersley, the former Labour deputy leader, heads the list of declared earnings, disclosing income of up to £10,000 for newspaper work. Page 8

Courts 'unfair'

The British court martial system was condemned as unfair and in breach of human rights in a unanimous ruling by the European Court of Human Rights. Page 11

Human clones

The scientists at the centre of a successful experiment to clone a sheep said that the same techniques could be used on human beings, but it would be unacceptable. Page 3

Divorce pensions split is delayed for three years

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PLANS to allow divorcing couples to split their pensions at the time they break up will be unveiled in a White Paper today.

But Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish, a Social Security Minister, will announce that the proposals will not be retrospective and are unlikely to come into effect until 2000.

The proposals were originally opposed by the Government - until Ministers bowed to Labour pressure to ensure that the Family Law Bill, containing other divorce law reforms, got through the Commons last year. Labour attempted to amend the Bill to include pension splitting but ministers argued that the issue was so complex that it required separate legislation. Labour will almost certainly introduce similar laws, if it wins the election.

Under the plans, divorcing couples will be able to agree to split the capital sum which has already accrued in a



It's an extraordinary breakthrough - they can turn one pension into two identical halves!

by the divorcing couple rather than the taxpayer or other pension holders.

Although in most cases the new laws will benefit the spouse without a pension, Ministers concede that it could lead to more cases where the family house has to be sold. Under present arrangements the husband often agrees that the wife keeps the house as part of a financial settlement because he will get the pension.

Ministers hope that the changes will encourage more women to take out personal pensions. They also point out the advantage of a clean break at the time of the divorce. Under the Pension Act 1995, women are now entitled to a share of their husband's pension when he retires.

Some aspects of the legislation are still causing problems. These include what happens where a pension has already been paid out, where the husband has retired.

Tory accuses BBC of paid-leave bias

By CAROL MIDDLETON

THE BBC was accused of political bias yesterday for giving a Radio 4 broadcast five months' paid leave to fight a marginal seat for Labour.

Ben Bradshaw, a presenter for *The World at One*, has not worked on the programme since being selected as a election candidate for Exeter in September. His Conservative rival, Dr Adrian Rogers, who has a private medical practice in the city, said: "If the BBC was paying for me to campaign I would be able to canvass every house in Exeter but I have to work ten hours a day as a doctor to keep my family fed."

"The BBC have given Mr Bradshaw a huge advantage. It is very difficult to find the time out of a professional working day to nurse a constituency and, personally, I am self-employed and can only do it with a financial sacrifice."

"I am not complaining about my lot but if my opponent is being paid out of mine and every other licence-

holder's money then it is not fair, I have heard of companies who give candidates paid leave to fight elections because they judge it is in their best interests but for the BBC to take that view is quite wrong. I have always said the BBC is left of centre and this confirms my suspicions."

Last night, within hours of the complaint, the BBC said that it had found Mr Bradshaw a full-time job in west London. It added: "He will be working for the new head of business programmes on a project looking at closer integration of radio and television business coverage."

The Exeter seat, which Sir John Hannan, the retiring Tory MP, won with a 4,045 majority in 1992, is regarded as a key marginal that promises a colourful fight.

Mr Bradshaw is openly homosexual and Dr Rogers a right-wing moral campaigner who describes homosexuality as "a sterile, disease-ridden and god-forsaken occupation".

Mr Bradshaw

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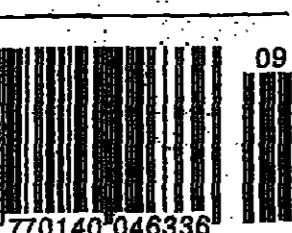
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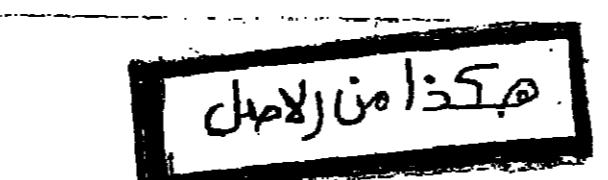
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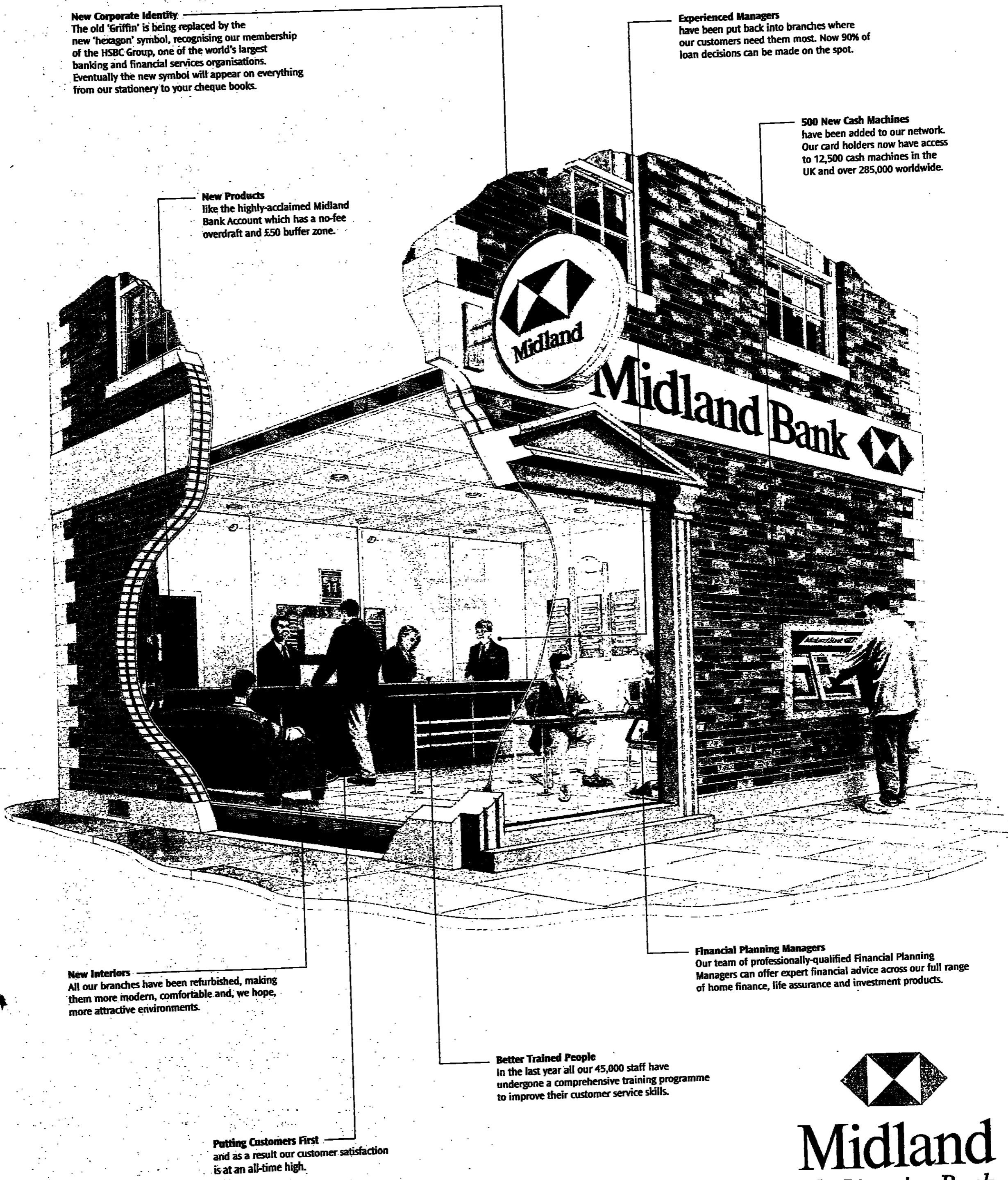
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Shades of Thatcher would haunt No 10 under Blair

IN office, Tony Blair would seek to re-establish the power and control that Margaret Thatcher wielded over the government machine. He wants to ensure clear and strong leadership, with Downing Street firmly in the driving seat on all matters of government business.

The key to his success would be a strong team in No 10 which could keep check on Whitehall departments and ensure that any awkward ministers toe the line. Plum posts would be almost certain to go to Jonathan Powell, his chief of staff, Alastair Campbell, his press secretary and David Milliband, currently his policy adviser.

In Opposition, Mr Blair has been accused of turning his private office into a kitchen Cabinet. Many Labour MPs are critical, but respect the strength of his

leadership. Mr Blair has strong beliefs and intends to impress them on Whitehall — unlike Mr Major, whose grip on the Government machine has frequently been weak.

Instead, the Labour leader expects Downing Street under his premiership to give out clear signals to the rest of Whitehall. He and his key appointees intend to achieve this by beefing up the political numbers at Downing Street.

Otherwise, as is customary, Mr Blair would work with Mr Major's senior officials, who would take pains to ensure there was a smooth handover.

He would be expected to rely enormously on Alex Allan, the Prime Minister's principal private secretary, and Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary. Their job is to assist a new Prime



Tony Blair believes the key to success in office would be his control of the levers of power. Valerie Elliott, Whitehall Editor, examines how Labour would organise its first government for 18 years

Minister and offer advice. Sir Robin is to retire next year anyway and he would be able to advise Mr Blair on a successor. Similarly, Mr Allan would normally be expected to move back to the Treasury in a senior post.

They would be counter-balanced by the strengthened political presence at the centre of Mr Powell, tipped to take on the job of chief of staff; the bright policy

adviser, Mr Milliband, and Mr Blair's shrewd press secretary and friend, Mr Campbell.

Mr Blair's approach is described in Labour circles as "strategic leadership", by which they mean the firm smack of a Prime Minister in control. His team have recognised that an incoming Labour government must make an immediate impression on the Whitehall machine,

otherwise the sheer weight of inertia and everyday business will deflect them from their plans.

Mr Blair and his aides have therefore spent considerable time selecting priorities for government. The deliberations have, however, been difficult for the leader. He has insisted to his staff that his priority is to secure a general election victory and he does not wish to be accused of presumption or complacency by getting embroiled in detailed plans for government.

He is so sensitive to accusations of taking the result for granted, and so irritated when his colleagues discuss possible life at No 10, that he has instructed his press office to stave off questions about it from journalists. Nevertheless, political realities dictate that his

office has had to prepare a programme for government. It has examined the present structures and methods at No 10 and, Whitehall and has decided there must be much more of a strategic overview on all business from Downing Street. The plans are contained in a document known as a "Day One Brief" which sets out the priorities on winning the election; the ideas for changing the ministries; and the outline of a Budget and the first legislative programme to form the Queen's Speech.

Officials at the Cabinet Office under David Wilkinson, head of the machinery of government unit, are already working on some of these plans in preparation for a possible Labour victory.

Leading article, page 19

Policy head would need one eye on second term

ONE of the most important appointments Mr Blair would have to make is the head of his policy unit. He wants somebody inside Downing Street who would run a small team to provide independent advice and to work on long-term policy issues. It is one of the most senior posts in government and the holder would take on the rank of permanent secretary with a salary between £90,000 and £150,000.

The policy unit has up to nine staff and is based in a cluster of tiny second floor rooms at No 10. Its head has frequent access to the Prime Minister, briefs him, prepares him for Cabinet committees, has access to key Government papers and may even be invited to sit in at a Cabinet meeting.

He or she, may often be asked to resolve conflicts in Whitehall and broker deals between ministers and their departments.

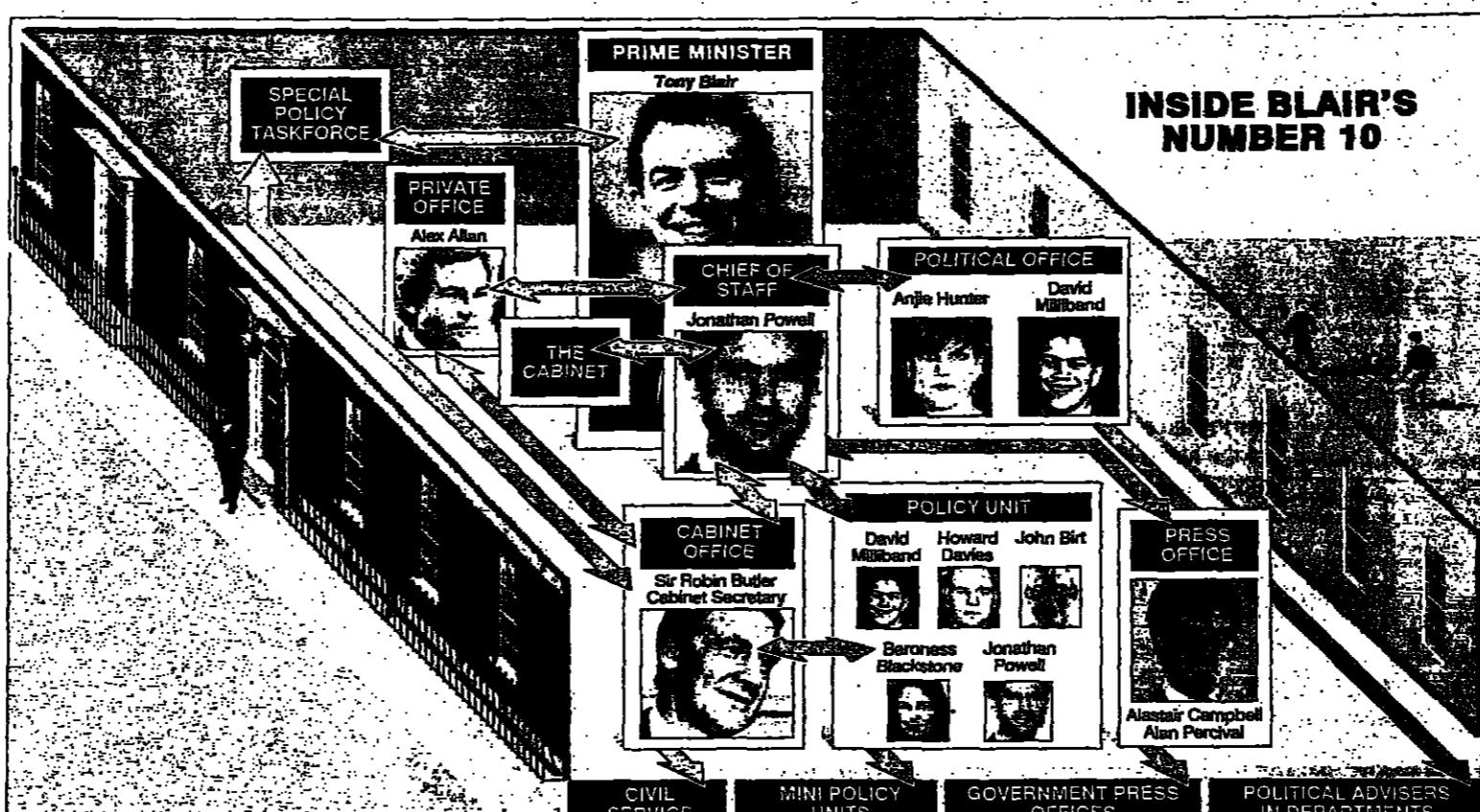
Mr Blair would like to attract a senior figure from the private sector or academic in the mould of Lord Rothschild, a former MI5 officer and director of research at Shell, who worked for Edward

Heath. Senior Labour figures accept, however, that it might be difficult to tempt someone from a top corporate job into public office. Someone from the business world might become exasperated with the slow pace of government and would be unfamiliar with Whitehall's subtle ways.

The name of John Birt, Director-General of the BBC, has been touted in Labour circles for the job. Mr Birt, however, does not want it and has just signed a new four-year contract.

The personality of the head of the policy unit — and their rapport with the Prime Minister — largely determines the role. Mr Blair would want somebody who could help him deliver a second term in office, somebody with an eye for the future and a second party manifesto. He is determined that the policy unit head would concentrate on long-term forecasting and not become embroiled in crisis management.

Lord Donoughue headed the unit for James Callaghan and although he wanted to concentrate on longer-term ideas he was frequently side-



Powerful new-style watchdog would be PM's ears

A NEW role of chief of staff at No 10 might be set up by Tony Blair to keep tabs on the activities of every office in the building. The holder of the position would be the Prime Minister's eyes and ears and the link between civil servants and the political staff.

Margaret Thatcher tried something similar, although her appointee, Sir David Wilson, did not stay long at Downing Street and was never an integral part of the machine. Jonathan Powell, chief of staff in Mr Blair's Opposition office, is tipped for the job. Some Whitehall watchers consider the post a non-role and believe Mr Powell would be a better head of policy.

A key role would be to smooth away tensions or rifts between the Prime Minister's private office and the political staff. The chief would have to be in close touch with the political and press secretaries as well as the Prime Minister's principal private secretary. The job would also mean working closely with the Cabinet Secretary and keeping a close eye on committees and their agendas.

David Hunt, asked to investigate the idea of a chief of staff for John Major, came down against the idea. He said the key co-ordination should be between the Cabinet Office and Downing Street, rather than between the various parts of No 10.

In an internal paper he suggested instead that a senior politician with a clear strategy and strength of character should be appointed as a powerful troubleshooter and co-ordinator. His paper led to the appointment of Michael Heseltine as Deputy Prime Minister, one of the most powerful offices in Whitehall.

Mr Heseltine is the Government's troubleshooter and sits at the hub of the machine. His pivotal role is chairing the daily strategy committee, which co-ordinates the presentation of policy. It brings together a number of Cabinet Ministers, senior Whitehall officials and party aides to discuss the day's agenda.

Under Labour it is thought John Prescott would assume the title but not the responsibility for chairing key Cabinet committees. Labour politicians argue that with a powerful Prime Minister in Downing Street there would be no need for such a vehicle.

There is also a view that Mr Blair would prefer smaller strategy meetings and he is known to want a strong team of personal political advisers to deal with day-to-day issues as well as to keep a firm rein on the network of advisers working for other Ministers.

No-nonsense press chief likely to shake up briefings

THE appointment of Alastair Campbell as the Downing Street press secretary would signal a no-nonsense style in dealings with the media.

Mr Campbell's strength is that he knows Mr Blair so well that he can second-guess his views and mood on a range of issues. He is also adept at adding the political spin and would work closely with the political secretary and staff brought in by Mr Blair.

His twice-daily briefings in Downing Street and at the

House of Commons would be as well-attended as the days when Sir Bernard Ingham, press secretary to Margaret Thatcher, used colourful language to describe her latest bugbear. Although he was a civil servant, Sir Bernard became so close to Mrs Thatcher that reporters knew he was speaking on her behalf.

A return to this style would delight political journalists who, under John Major, have experienced a succession of press secretaries in the more

POLICY TASK FORCES

Better co-ordination is planned between Ministers and departments on key issues. One idea is for the creation of small units with an official from each Whitehall department. They would be able to take an overview on a particular policy, such as youth or the family. Labour frontbenchers have been impressed by the success of the drugs unit, based in the Cabinet Office and staffed by officials from the Home Office, Education and Health.

Instead of setting up lengthy Royal Commissions to discuss difficult long-term problems for Government, Mr Blair might invite a mixture of politicians, businessmen, lawyers and academics to examine such large issues as the minimum wage or welfare reform. They would work together as a task force and report to him.

traditional and cautious government mould, such as Guy O'Donnell, the Treasury official who has just been appointed Treasury Minister at the British Embassy in Washington. Jonathan Haskins, Mr Major's previous press secretary, from the Government Information Service, is expected to quit Whitehall for the private sector if there were a Labour victory.

As well as heading the official Downing Street press office, Mr Campbell would also liaise with government information officers. It is not yet clear how the office would function but, even though some in Whitehall have dubbed it "the double-headed monster", they are convinced it could work.

The weekly meeting of senior Whitehall press officers would be expected to gain new status under the chairmanship of Mr Campbell. Under Sir Bernard, government directors of information rarely missed a meeting, but its importance has dwindled and only chief press officers now regularly turn up.

Building work would be needed to get Downing Street into the family way

IF the Blair family move into No 10 the top floor will echo to the sound of children for the first time since Harold Macmillan's grandchildren had the run of it during his tenure, which ended in 1963.

No 10 is not an ideal home for a young family with three lively children. Euan, 13, Nicholas, 11 and Kathryn, 8, Mr Blair would be the first incumbent with children since Clement Attlee moved out in 1951. Attlee managed to make a home for his family by taking over some of the servants' quarters on the top floor to make extra bedrooms. But the Majors' flat at the top of the house is open plan and comprises a series of rooms along a narrow corridor adjacent to other offices inside Downing Street.

Occasionally, the Majors have even been known to use the state drawing room, the

White Room, as an alternative sitting room. Labour aides have, however, identified a number of rooms which could be used to extend Mr Major's two-bedroom flat with sitting room and tiny kitchen. There are two or three little-used computer training rooms alongside the flat, as well as a few bedrooms sometimes used by staff.

The main problem would be to ensure privacy for the Blairs. One Whitehall source said it would be possible to have a special door put in to No 10 to section off the private accommodation. The expectation is that if Mr Blair won the

election his family would not formally move in until the accommodation was ready. But the building can be made into a home.

Macmillan's grandson, Lord Stockton, recalled how he was taunted by his grandmother from playing hopscotch with the policeman in the black-and-white-tiled hall at No 10. "She wanted to make the job tolerable and so insisted that it should be treated like a family house. But even she thought it was too much to see the policeman playing with me when Cabinet Ministers and other visitors were arriving at the door."

At a party, he recalls, he and his cousins ended up doing the conga in the basement and, because all the corridors interconnected, they ended up in the Ministry of Defence building on the other side of Whitehall.



Macmillan's grandchildren were welcome at No 10

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Blair

'I am delighted that these dresses, which gave me such pleasure, may be enjoyed by others'

Princess's designer dresses go on show before auction

BY JOANNA BALE

SOME of the 80 designer dresses belonging to Diana, Princess of Wales, which are to be sold at auction were displayed at Christie's in London yesterday.

Proceeds of the sale, in New York on June 25, will go to the Royal Marsden Hospital Cancer Fund and the Aids Crisis Trust as well as American cancer and Aids charities.

The auction, which Christie's confirmed was the idea of Prince William, is expected to raise £4 million and will include some of the Princess's most famous dresses, by British designers such as Catherine Walker, Zandra Rhodes and Bruce Oldfield.

A statement from the Princess said: "I am extremely happy to have this wonderful opportunity to raise money for charities devoted to the care of cancer and Aids sufferers both here in the United Kingdom and America. It goes without saying that I am also delighted that these dresses, which gave me so much pleasure, may be enjoyed by others."

Most of the dresses, which range from size 8 to 12, were worn at royal and state occasions between 1981 and 1996. The entire collection will go on view at Christie's in London between June 2 and June 6 before being shipped to New York for the auction.

They include an ivory silk crepe evening dress and jacket embroidered with simulated pearls worn at a fashion awards ceremony in 1989 at the Albert Hall in London and designed by Catherine Walker, whose label appears most often in the collection.

The collection, entitled "Dresses", also features a Victor Edelstein strapless oyster satin dress worn at the Elysée Palace in 1981; a long evening dress of pink wild silk with an embroidered jacket by Catherine Walker, worn to private receptions in India in 1992; a sari-like evening dress of white silk chiffon by Hartnell, worn to the ballet in Brazil; a long strapless evening dress of midnight blue silk net, by Murray Arbeid, worn at a party given by King Constantine of Greece at Claridge's in 1986; a long evening dress and tail coat of burgundy velvet by Catherine Walker worn in Korea in 1992 and to film premieres. The Princess's wedding dress will not be sold.

Christopher Balfour, chairman of Christie's Europe, said the Princess had said that the idea for the sale had come

from Prince William. "I imagine the idea came from seeing all these beautiful dresses — I think it's rather sweet."

The collection offers an insight into royal dressing and of the taste of the young Princess "whose every fashion preference inspired the world", Mr Balfour said. He added that the Princess had

chosen the dresses to be auctioned and that there were no reserve prices.

Several charity events are being organised to publicise the sale and the Princess is expected to attend at least one function in London.

Mr Balfour declined to speculate on how much the sale might raise. "It is unquantifiable. These sorts of sales are unique. You just can't estimate how much money people will be prepared to pay," he said.

"These dresses have a sort of magic about them."

Full details of the collection are being kept secret until the catalogue is published in May, but staff said it contained some dresses never seen in

public because they had been worn at private parties.

Meredith Etherington-Smith, creative marketing director at Christie's, said: "The Princess has huge numbers of admirers all over the world who are fascinated by her, and I think museums will be very interested in bidding." Asked how the Princess would feel if

her dresses were bought by cabaret artists or transvestites, Ms Etherington-Smith said: "I suspect she would be happy as long as they enjoyed them."

The auction is being organised on a non-profit-making basis by Christie's, which emphasised that all the proceeds would go to charity.



A black crêpe dinner dress by Catherine Walker; another Walker dress outside Christie's yesterday; and an Edelstein dress worn to a state dinner with President Mitterrand



from the collection of Diana, Princess of Wales



Bad taste king takes trash off the streets

BY GRACE BRADBERRY
STYLE EDITOR

BOOB tubes, scarlet knickers and black lace leggings were rehabilitated yesterday as one of London's most modish designers put Soho trash fashion on the catwalk.

Roland Mouret, a Frenchman who designs under the label People Corporation, turned the basement of Holborn's Leisure Lounge night-club into a sleazy dive. Mouret, 36, moved here five years ago, believing the French would not understand his bad-taste style. The furry leg warmers with black stilettos and the bibs, printed with "Amour", which substitute for shirts, were a hit at London Fashion Week. As proof of the label's cachet, American actress Chloe Sevigny, recently featured on the cover of *The Face* magazine and hailed as one of the "coolest" people of the moment, modelled in the show.

Mouret said: "It's about the sort of people I love. Their lives are a bit trashy and nasty on the outside, but they're lovely people inside."

Highlights of the collection were a shaggy black cape and tiny dresses that barely skimmed the thigh, worn with blue cowboy boots. Mouret described the look as "Victorian punk".

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Chancellor Brown unlikely to avoid tax and spending rises

Public spending and taxes will be higher under a Blair than a re-elected Major government, but the increases will almost certainly be smaller than those recorded since 1992. That is obviously merely a best guess, informed I hope, but nearer the mark than either Gordon Brown's Iron Chancellor stance or the Tories' allegations about big rises in spending under Labour.

Conservative Central Office yesterday played down earlier claims that Labour pledges would add £30 billion to spending by the fifth year of a Parliament. This figure is widely regarded as implausible

and, while not abandoning it, Kenneth Clarke yesterday more realistically focused on Mr Brown's pledge to stick to existing spending plans, in detail for the coming financial year, and in aggregate for the year after. This is apart from the employment package financed by the windfall levy on the utilities.

The Chancellor's claim of a £12.4 billion black hole over two years looks well over the top, partly because of the treatment of the windfall levy. However, the Tories are now attacking Labour where it is vulnerable since the party has opposed many of the

financed by banks would all add to public spending and borrowing. Labour would also face strong pressures to increase spending on health and education.

I have no doubt of Mr Brown's determination to hold down spending, and he may succeed in the short term. But over a full Parliament it will be hard to avoid increases. In his new *What Labour Can Do*, Richard Layard of the London School of Economics argues that there is no case for reducing public spending, currently over 41 per cent of national income, to below 40 per cent and a slightly higher figure may be

necessary to achieve Labour's social objectives.

By contrast, John Major this week reaffirmed his commitment to reducing spending below 40 per cent and keeping it there. This does not mean aiming for 30 per cent since Mr Major's advisers specifically reject the radical options for comprehensive education vouchers and private insurance in health and social security advocated by some on the Tory Right. They favour a gradualist approach including a shift to private financing, where possible, as in higher education. Given the aim of producing a balanced

budget by the end of the century, this might involve reducing the spending share to, say, 37 to 38 per cent over the next few years, depending on the state of the economy. So even on the probably over-optimistic assumption that a re-elected Major Government succeeds in holding down spending, the gap with Labour plans might be about 3 per cent or so of national income. This is a sizeable sum, but less than the five-point rise under the Tories in the first half of the 1990s.

The Downing Street Policy Unit has devised a chart showing public spending as a percentage of

national income in Britain compared with France, Germany and Italy. The three lines are similar from the mid-1960s until the mid-1970s, then start to diverge and are now roughly ten points apart. The implication is that this is the gain from Tory policies – though the gap started under Labour in the late 1970s – and that a Blair government would raise the spending share towards the continental share. Voters do face a choice, but it is much narrower than between British and continental levels of spending and tax.

PETER RIDDELL

Highest paid MPs declare earnings of £50,000 plus

BY ANDREW PIERCE
AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

TOP TEN

	declared earnings of up to
Roy Hattersley, Lab	£110,000
Robert Atkins, C	£85,000
Harold Eddison, C	£60,000
Sir Dudley Smith, C	£55,000
Jack Aspinwall, C	£55,000
John Greenway, C	£50,000
Alun Michael*, Lab	£50,000
Keith Hampton, C	£46,000
Patrick Nicholls, C	£46,000
*earnings spent entirely on staff and office expenses	

The total income disclosed in the second register of members' interests has fallen by more than £300,000. However, the figures represent only a fraction of the total earnings from outside interests.

New rules drawn up two years ago after the cash-for-questions affair have forced MPs to declare earnings from outside work if it is related to their Commons position. Several MPs earn six-figure sums through directorships and other outside work that is not connected with the Commons activities.

Although some MPs go into minute detail, several refuse to disclose income from long lists of outside employers on the ground that it is not directly related to their position as an MP. Among the most prominent is Sir Edward Heath, Norman Lamont, David Mellor and Kenneth Baker.

Roy Hattersley, Labour's former deputy leader, leads the list again this year with his

while his consultancies for William Hill and Scottish Coal generated up to £30,000. Harold Eddison (C, Blackpool North) disclosed earnings of up to £60,000 for his management consultancy, which advises clients on international business.

Sir Dudley Smith (C, Warwick and Leamington) declared earnings of up to £55,000 from clients of his management consultancy. Paul Marland (C, Gloucester West) matched earnings of up to £55,000, declaring advisory work for the British Metals Federation, Unigate Dairies, Reclamation Association and Rank Xerox.

John Greenway (C, Ryedale)

listed outside earnings of up to £50,000, which elevated him to the top six of declared backbench earners. He earns up to £40,000 as a parliamentary adviser to the Institute of Insurance Brokers, Yorkshire Tyne Tees Television and a health company. He is also a director of an insurance broking firm and declared a further £10,000 for other outside work.

Jack Aspinwall (C, Wansdyke) is in the top 10 for the second year in succession. His consultancies with Rentokil, BAA, and British Gas brought him an extra income of up to £55,000.

Under the rules, MPs need to declare their earnings only in £5,000 bands and Mr Atkins declared that he is paid between £25,000 to £30,000 as Parliamentary adviser to ICL, a

£110,000 earnings from journalism, including up to £80,000 from *The Mail on Sunday* and up to £30,000 from *The Guardian*. Many MPs earn considerably more in undeclared income.

Mr Hattersley is followed in the list by several Tory MPs who have boosted their earnings during the past year. Robert Atkins, a former Environment Minister, has risen to second place in the table, declaring earnings of up to £65,000.

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ing rises.



Fiennes nominated

Patient writer's Bafta bonanza

By DALYA ALBERGE

A FILM yet to be released in Britain but already hailed as a classic was showered yesterday with 13 Bafta nominations.

The English Patient, a love story starring Ralph Fiennes, received 12 Oscar nominations last week. It was brought to the screen by Anthony Minghella, who began screenwriting for the children's television series *Grange Hill*. He wrote and directed the acclaimed film *Truly, Madly, Deeply*, but struggled for four years to find backing for *The English Patient*, which he adapted from a Booker Prize-winning novel by Michael Ondrasik.

The nominations by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts included best film, best achievement in direction and best adapted screenplay. The film opens on March 14.

Fiennes was nominated for best actor. His estranged wife, Alex Kingston, has been nominated for best television actress for *Moll Flanders*.

Other films that received multiple nominations for the Baftas were *Shine*, *Secrets and Lies* and *Evita*. The awards will be presented on April 29.

Steamed puddings are out, pasta is in, under government guidelines

The chips are down for stodgy school dinners

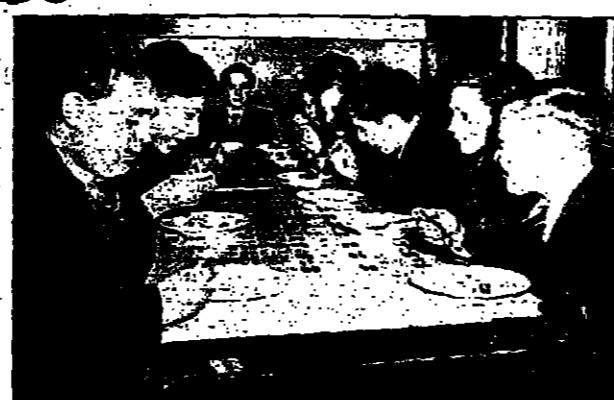
By JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

STAPLES of the traditional school dinner — steamed puddings, sausages, dumplings and lemon meringue pie — will disappear from the menu if canteen cooks take the advice of Cheryl Gillan, the Education Minister.

She issued guidelines yesterday to make school meals healthier. Recognising that the chip cannot be banned, she urged schools to serve chunky or oven-cooked chips rather than the crinkle-cut variety or French fries.

Mrs Gillan, launching the initiative at Argyle Primary School in north London, said: "School food has improved by leaps and bounds in recent years. Greasy chips and soggy vegetables should be a thing of the past. With the help of this guidance, I want to see school food get even better."

The initiative will encourage cooks to give pupils less fat, sugar and salt, and more fibre, vegetables and carbohydrates. The aim is to make popular food healthy within a limited budget. Spaghetti bolognese should contain more pasta and less meat, and hamburgers less burger and more bread, to cut fat and cost and to boost energy-giving carbohydrates. The smell of



The old school: how traditional canteen fare of meat and two veg was served up in the past

kitchens, but the Government has ruled out compulsion.

A spokesman for the Education Department said the improvements were voluntary because "we don't believe someone in London should be telling pupils in Lancaster what to eat". But campaigning groups, while welcoming the advice, predict that it will be ineffective if not enforced.

Ben Priestley, assistant national officer of Unison, the public service union, said: "Without the necessary backing under legislation, the guidelines — however good — can still be ignored by school-meals providers, particularly private contractors motivated

by profit. Often the cheapest contract wins and caterers opt for a free-choice cafeteria system providing fast food such as burgers and chips."

Imogen Sharp, director of the National Heart Forum and secretary of the School Meals Campaign, said it was crucial the guidelines were written into school meals contracts.

Prices ranged from 65p in Isle of Wight to £1.50 in the London borough of Greenwich when a survey was carried out for Unison last year. Yesterday, there was a similar variety of prices and dishes.

Lunch at Manchester Grammar School, one of the leading independent schools, cost £1.43. The main options were layered liver and bacon, vegetarian chili, pork sausages, fish fingers or 13 salads. All were served with a choice of chips, rice, baked beans and vegetables.

The hot pudding was apple crumble and custard, or there were buttered scones, fruit or yoghurt.

At Dulwich High School for Boys, the south London comprehensive formerly called William Penn, the menu was simpler. For £1.08 the pupils had savoury mince or veggie burger with diced carrots or pasta, followed by chocolate roll and custard.



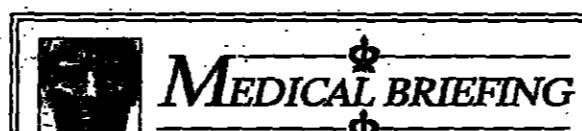
Chips with everything but modern schools' cafeteria-style dishes can be improved

Iron Lady would have approved of emphasis on vitamins

THAT catchy refrain of the early 1970s, "Margaret Thatcher, milk snatcher", was unfair to the Education Secretary, as she was then.

As one of the parliamentary rebels on school milk — John Gummer was another — I had frequent discussions with her about school meals in general, and milk in particular. She readily accepted the importance of school meals as an essential source of nourishment for children who would otherwise be malnourished.

She claimed that her defence of school milk had been



Dr Thomas Stuttaford

overruled in Cabinet; implying that Edward Heath, the Prime Minister, was opposed to a daily ration.

The new government

guidelines on healthy eating for children are aimed partic-

ularly at those preparing school meals, but apply equally to whoever looks after the household menu. They recommend that, as a minimum, school meals should provide a third of a child's daily calorie

requirement. As in all recent advice, the authors would like to see a reduction in the overall amount of fat eaten, so that it accounts for no more than 35 per cent of the daily calorie intake. Saturated fats — those derived from animals whether as meat, cream or milk — should not contribute more than 11 per cent of the daily calorie count.

The recommended diet for children emphasises the importance of the anti-oxidising vitamins. It is suggested that school meals provide an admirable opportunity to make

certain that children have a satisfactory folic acid intake, and that school lunch should provide 40 per cent of the daily requirement of this vitamin, 35 per cent of the necessary vitamin C, and 30 per cent of vitamin A. The antioxidant vitamins protect against infection, and in the long term are cardio-protective and anti-malignant.

Baroness Thatcher, never the milk snatcher, will be pleased to see that milk, and the calcium that is one of its most important constituents, receives a special mention.

The guidelines recommend semi-skimmed milk, presumably for the over-fives, as an invaluable source of calcium, and also commend low-fat cheeses and yoghurt.

Everyone is encouraged to eat plenty of polysaccharides, whether in the form of rice, starches, porridge or similar foods. We should all be eating more fruit and vegetables, selected lean meat, enjoy our fish, have plenty of beans and peas, and of course, keep our fat intake down to under 35 per cent of our total calorie intake.

Tins of beans at least 18 years old were found on a grocer's shelves by trading standards officers. Kapur Mehan, of Nottingham, who admitted contravening the Food Safety Act, was given a 12-month conditional discharge.

Flower protected

A tiny flower found only on limestone around Inglesborough in North Yorkshire is to be protected against ramblers, poachers and cars. About 2,000 *Arenaria norvegica anglica*, a variety of sandwort, survive.



Perhaps you've admired them from afar: The telecommunications firm that set a goal

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Mouse causes loss of 50 jobs

A catering firm supplying school dinners has been shut down with the loss of 50 jobs because a fieldmouse crept into a tinned-food store.

Ian Denley, solicitor for Eve Catering of Wellington, Somerset, said: "There was no risk of contamination because everything was in tins. The firm lost business worth £160,000 and the chance of a £1 million contract that would have created 20 jobs."

Body retrieved

The body of a miner was recovered seven hours after he was buried under more than 30 tonnes of rubble. John Hall, 56, was leading four colliers down a tunnel at the Castle drift mine at Blenkinsopp Castle, Northumberland.

'Drugs' vomited

A man was under armed guard in hospital in Shannon, Ireland, after vomiting packets suspected to contain cocaine on a flight from Heathrow to New York. The aircraft was diverted after the Jamaican man, 20, became ill. On your bike

Cotswold councillors are to spend £5,000 on nine mopeds so that unemployed people in rural areas can get to interviews and jobcentres. Gloucestershire Rural Community Council will rent out the 49cc machines for £1 a week.

Has-beans

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Flower protected

A tiny flower found only on limestone around Inglesborough in North Yorkshire is to be protected against ramblers, poachers and cars. About 2,000 *Arenaria norvegica anglica*, a variety of sandwort, survive.





**THIS MAN HAS
SOMETHING
EXTREMELY RARE.
A HOSPITAL BED.**

He's one of the lucky ones. Every week over a thousand NHS operations are cancelled for want of a hospital bed. 43,000 beds have been lost since 1990. There are 50,000 fewer nurses than in 1990. No wonder so many people have been waiting over a year and a half for treatment. This government is running our National Health Service into the ground. Meanwhile private hospital beds have increased by 66%. If all this makes you sick, save your anger for polling day.

UNISON
the public service union

Fifty other
will cost £

W
d

WORLD
SUMMARY
Dissident
Russian
writer die

Televised tears are official epitaph for Deng

Cacophony of
city's growth
muffles noisy
tribute to
reformer

FROM JAMES PRINGLE
IN BEIJING

IT WAS ironic that, in the end, most citizens outside the centre of Beijing did not hear trains hoot for three minutes and factory sirens sound in mourning for the death of Deng Xiaoping yesterday, because of the thunderous noise of traffic and construction. In a way, it was a fitting epitaph for Deng, China's last great revolutionary leader, for he brought the burgeoning development to China.

A small incident illustrated the strengths and repressions of Deng's China outside Beijing railway station — a relic of the Maoist era — just before 10am, the hour of the start of the Chinese leader's official funeral in the Great Hall of the People.

A young man was telling a foreign correspondent how without Deng's reforms he would never have been able to go to university when police asked for the journalist's credentials, saying no interviews were permitted without the permission of the railway department's foreign affairs bureau. There was a danger, the police captain said, that "a crowd would gather".

Soon afterwards the station clock chimed the opening bars of *The East Is Red*, one of the few pieces in China where the Cultural Revolution anthem can still be heard, and on the



President Jiang Zemin, centre, and a People's Liberation Army officer, weep for Deng at Beijing's Great Hall of the People yesterday. Their sentiments are echoed in Chengdu, Sichuan province



massive television monitor on the front of the building, Li Peng, the Chinese Prime Minister, in a broadcast from the Great Hall, said three words — "Grieve in silence" — and bowed his head. Hundreds at the station stood, solemn but dry-eyed.

Deng is respected, rather than loved, in China for the relative prosperity he has brought many. This is partly a legacy of the greater sophistication of a better-off population, whose concerns are now less revolutionary than workaholic, and partly as a result of his darker side, most notably

the military crackdown he ordered on pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in June 1989.

Because he is not universally loved, as was Zhou Enlai, the former Prime Minister, whose 1976 obsequies set off riots, most people regret his passing but regard it with a relative lack of emotion. This is why, apart from pictures on state television of people weeping — are selected by the cameramen under party instructions because they are crying — most people have contained their tears.

President Jiang Zemin

sobbed as he began to deliver his 50-minute eulogy. "With Jiang, some of it at least has got to be political theatre," said one analyst. "At the same time, most of the ordinary people who are seen crying on Chinese television, it's all part of the contrived, stage-managed nature of Deng's death and aftermath. You don't see people crying as you travel round the city."

It is only in recent times that weeping has become acceptable in China. During the 1960s and 1970s, when children were sent off to the "grassroots to learn from the

peasants", parents and offspring had to keep a stoic demeanour. Nowadays, people at railway stations do not feel bad to be seen fighting back tears when saying goodbye to loved ones. It is also acceptable for lovers to embrace and hold hands. Once, as I saw here in the Seventies, even love seemed to be dead.

It would be hard to imagine Deng, the crusty old revolutionary and Long Marcher, to have ever been caught crying.

"Deng was okay, but nobody will cry, only his family," a taxi driver told me the morning after the paramount

leader died last week aged 92. On the other hand, diplomats say that tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of Chinese would have turned out to pay their last respects to the diminutive Sichuanese for the better life his reforms gave them.

But so nervous of unrest is the new leadership under President Jiang, who used an almost archaic Marxist nomenclature during his oration, that the Government has permitted only "official" carefully choreographed mourning, busing in mourners from factories and work units under

strict supervision. Because of demonstrations prompted by the spontaneous mourning of popular leaders, including Zhou, in 1976 and 1989, "sensitivity" is almost synonymous with "counter-revolution".

Yet there were some spontaneous moments yesterday when Tiananmen was reopened. Several dozen Chinese rushed to lay flowers on the monument to people's heroes — a focal point of the 1989 Tiananmen events — or shed their outer garments to reveal white mourning sheets underneath, or to post poems or posters. They were quickly

removed and a number were detained.

In his eulogy to 10,000 party members, with Deng's ashes at centre stage in a casket wrapped in the red hammer-and-sickle Communist flag, Mr Jiang used the word "comrade" frequently and vowed to continue Deng's free-market reforms, which have improved the lives of hundreds of millions of Chinese but have brought no political relaxation.

Deng's ashes were to be committed to the sea.

Leading article, page 19

North Korean defector dies after being shot by 'agents'

Seoul: A North Korean defector died in a hospital near the South Korean capital yesterday, ten days after he was shot by suspected Pyongyang agents.

Li Il Nam, 36, a relative of the former wife of Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader, was shot outside his temporary home at Bundang, south of Seoul. Police said the two gunmen were armed with Belgian-made Browning pistols, often used by North Korean agents.

In another development yesterday, President Kim Young Sam of South Korea publicly apologised for a bribery scandal and banished one of his sons allegedly involved in it. "I will not keep him near me," Mr Kim said in a nationally televised speech marking the fourth anniversary of his inauguration.



Lee attacked outside his home ten days ago

Hanbo Steel Industry, a flagship of the Hanbo group, the nation's fourteenth largest conglomerate, went bankrupt last month with debts of \$6 billion (£3.6 billion) — 22 times the value of its collateral. The debt was incurred mostly in government-controlled bank

loans. After Mr Kim's public apology, Lee Hong Koo, the chairman of the ruling New Korea Party and other NKP leaders tendered their resignations. Earlier, the 12 top office-holders in the President's secretariat stepped down.

The President gave no clear indication over whether he accepted the resignations, which would put the ruling party in disarray in the run-up to presidential elections in December. Radical South Korean students demanding the resignation of the President clashed with riot police yesterday, hours after the apology was made.

Strike plan: South Korea's outlawed Korean Confederation of Trade Unions said it would launch a general strike on Friday unless a controversial new labour law was repealed. (Reuters/AP/AFP)

'Advisory role' for mercenaries

Sydney: Foreign mercenaries hired to help to crush rebels on the Papua-New Guinea island of Bougainville would act in an advisory capacity and not take part in frontline fighting. Sir Julius Chan, the Prime Minister, promised last night (Roger Maynard writes).

Speaking on Australian television, Sir Julius defended his decision to draw on overseas forces in the nine-year-old secessionist conflict. He admitted privately that some of those involved were British and American soldiers. "They are here to upgrade the capacity, to get our soldiers to deal with a very hostile situation," he said. "But they will only be part of the advisory team ... and we will not be engaging them in the front line."

Israel turns desert salt water into wine

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN JERUSALEM

NOT content with making the desert bloom, Israeli expertise has now ensured that drinkers will soon be able to toast each other with cabernet sauvignon produced from grapes grown with salty groundwater in the Negev.

A team of university researchers from Israel and Turkey was reported to have succeeded in producing a successful first crop of seedless, purple-red grapes whose wine, they claim, tastes just like cabernet

sauvignon. Professor Yiftah Ben-Asher of the Desert Research Institute at Ben-Gurion University disclosed to a conference on desert agriculture attended by delegates from Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco and the Palestinian Authority that his half-acre of vines had just produced their first harvest.

A year after the institute planted its experimental crop, researchers planted a much larger vineyard, soon to expand to 20 acres, intended for commercial production. The wine will be bottled at Israel's Rishon Lezion winery.

"The wine has the same colour, aroma and taste as cabernet sauvignon grown in sweet water," Professor Ben-Asher claimed. "At least to the layman. We are now working to improve the flavour even more."

He said that underground water in the Negev has about one-tenth the salt concentration of the sea, but even that is fatal to most fruit and vegetables. The secret of the desert-produced vintage is that the root stock of the vines involved appears to work as a filter that keeps the salt out of the grapes.

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Democrat donor has links to Beijing

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

FOR the first time, a donor in the fundraising scandal that is swamping President Clinton and the Democrats was shown yesterday to have an official link to the Chinese Communist Government.

Ng Lap Seng, a property developer in Macau, made a contribution of \$15,000 (£9,250) that has been called into question during a secret internal audit by the Democratic National Committee. So far, dozens of political contributions from other donors, many of them Asians, that the committee is preparing to return this week — in addition to the \$1.5 million already sent back as tainted money.

Meanwhile, Mr Clinton rejected any suggestion that he had induced people to donate campaign funds by offering them overnight stays at the White House. "The Lincoln Bedroom was never sold," he said briefly. Mr Ng serves on the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in the Chinese city of Canton. The body acts as a national advisory board to the Chinese Government and the Communist Party.

Warning on Gulf War gas risk 'lost'

Washington: Documents made public yesterday reveal that the CIA warned the Pentagon in 1991 that American troops may have been exposed to chemical weapons in the Gulf War, five years before Pentagon officials said they were aware of it. (Ian Brodie writes).

Only last year did the Pentagon acknowledge that more than 20,000 troops may have been exposed to nerve gas during the destruction of an Iraqi weapons dump known as Kamiseyah. Previously American commanders had insisted they did not believe troops were exposed to nerve gas because no soldiers became seriously ill or died during the 1991 war.

The Pentagon offered no explanation of how it "lost" the CIA's detailed warnings. The confusion is bound to add to the widespread belief among thousands of veterans suffering from Gulf War Syndrome that their health problems were not taken seriously and that possible causes were hushed up. The documents, and the Pentagon's admission of having overlooked them, offer no new clues to the mystery of whether chemical weapons might have been responsible for their ailments.

The issue will now be pursued by President Clinton's advisory committee on Gulf War veterans' illnesses.



General Gutierrez: accused of being in pay of cartel.

Mexico clears out anti-drugs agency

BY IAN BRODIE

MEXICO has sacked 36 people in its anti-narcotics agency who were all linked to General Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo, a top official under arrest for allegedly taking bribes from the head of the country's biggest cocaine cartel. The general faces court-martial possibly for treason.

The clear-out, announced yesterday, appeared to be timed to try to salvage Mexico's drug-fighting reputation in Washington. President Clinton must decide this week whether Mexico is doing enough to combat drugs to qualify for continued American aid. Barry McCaffrey, the head of the White House anti-drugs office, said he chaired a

meeting of senior officials who seriously considered downgrading Mexico's rating as an ally in the drug fight.

The alleged betrayal by General Gutierrez is believed to have compromised much of America's war on drugs along the Mexican border.

Washington had briefed the general about informants, operations and satellite surveillance of the drug runners who smuggle two-thirds of the cocaine into the United States through Mexico from Colombia and elsewhere.

However, the United States might still give Mexico qualified approval on the grounds of its own national interests. Mr McCaffrey said.

Joseph Cohen, chairman of the Wall Street firm Cowen & Company, where Mr Coe worked for the past 30 years, said yesterday: "He was a consummate salesman with a high level of integrity. An interesting guy."

He was the oldest active stockbroker in the United States and, it is believed, in the world. Only when his children stopped him travelling after his 100th birthday did he cease making annual trips to London for a lunch at the City firm of Singer and Friedlander and to catch up on market intelligence.

Mr Cohen said that in the current runaway New York stock market Mr Coe, who worked from home for the past three years, was "bearish". He started work just after a major Dow Jones index "readjustment" and founded his own company in 1926 — three years before the disastrous crash of 1929.

Mr Coe was luckier and shrewder than most and ended 1929 with a profit. Having survived that catastrophe, he tended to take a relaxed view of later crises.

He is credited with inventing, more than 80 years ago, the use of technical analysis of companies' and investment trends. Most days he smoked a cigar — washed down by a stiff vodka — and up to his death he was full of schemes about how to "make a turn".

Cowen & Company has a reputation for longevity. Now that Mr Coe is gone, the title of senior professional at the firm passes to Irving Sherman, 92, who goes into the office every day and is said to be keenly competitive with brokers a fraction of his age.

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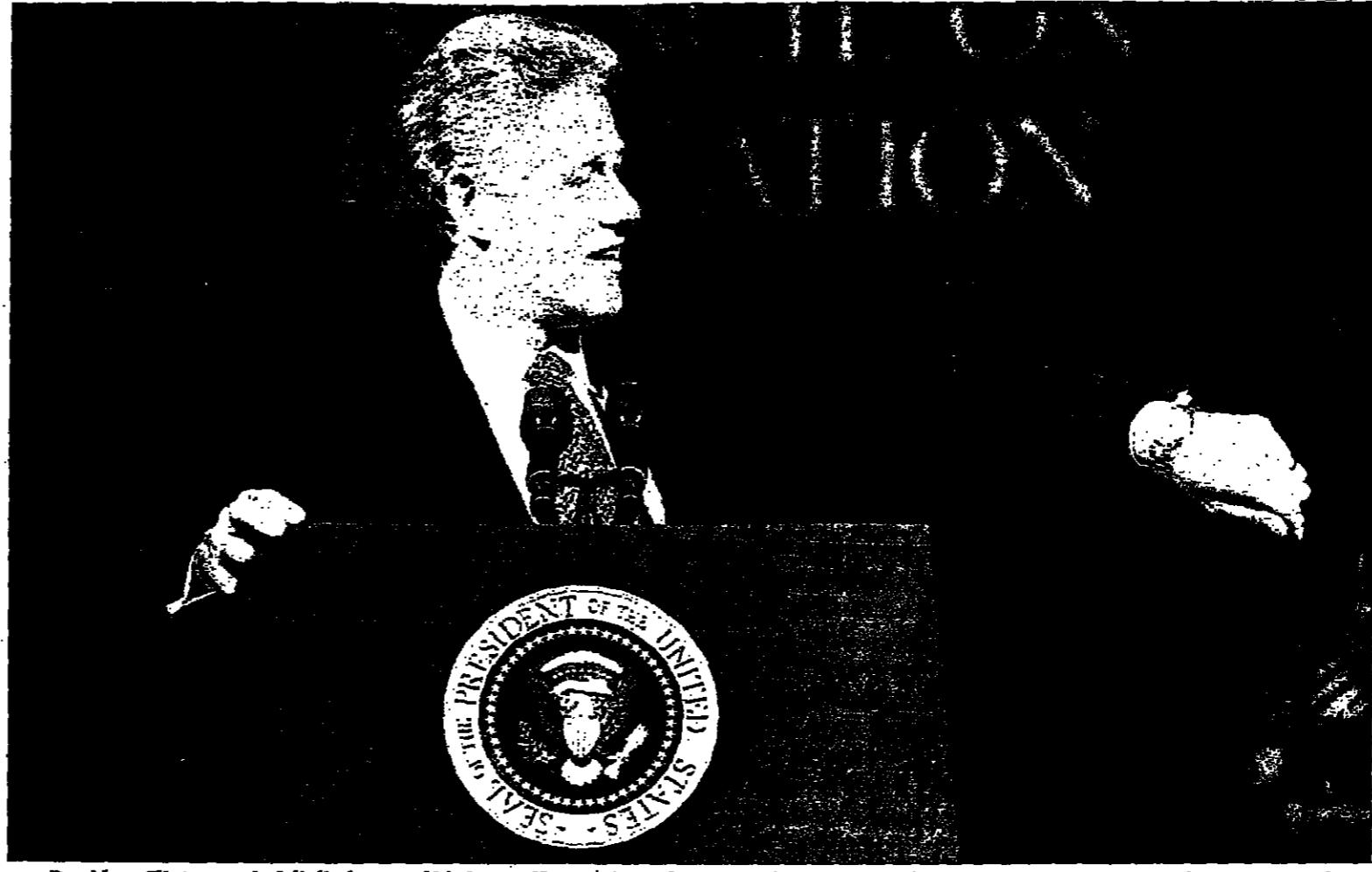
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President Clinton made full disclosure of his latest gift, an \$18 watch, at a Washington education conference yesterday. But he was angered by suggestions that he traded overnight stays at the White House for campaign funds. "The Lincoln Bedroom was never sold," he said.

ed to funnel funds into an American political party. Republicans are sharpening their knives in anticipation of congressional hearings which they promise will be devoted to exhaustive inquiries into the campaign finance director, according to officials. The memo said the promise of a coffee meeting or bed-and-breakfast at the White House should be used as "motivators" to en-

courage heavy contributors to give again. No one has said how many snuggled under the sheets of the Lincoln Bedroom, having given as much as \$100,000 each, but they were thought to number in the dozens.

However, Mr Clinton said:

"This is one more false story we have had to endure and the facts will show what the truth is." His aides were preparing to release a list of Mr Clinton's overnight guests to counter the allegation that invitations were an inducement to donors.

Mr Clinton is also trying hard to rebut suggestions that the foreign and domestic "fat-cat" contributors influenced government policy. All they got was a "respectful hearing"

about their concerns, but no guaranteed results, he said, a claim of innocence widely disbelieved by critics.

As the scandal unfolds, Mr Clinton has attended a Washington fundraiser, his third since his inauguration last month. The event raised \$500,000 towards paying off the Democrats' election debts of close to \$10 million.

Russia sidesteps US controls

BY IAN BRODIE

RUSSIA'S nuclear-weapons establishment was reported yesterday to have evaded United States export controls and obtained a powerful IBM supercomputer through a European middleman.

The Russians said they plan to use the IBM RS/6000 SP to simulate nuclear tests, but the Americans say such supercomputers, which are capable of performing ten billion calculations a second, could help Russia to design new arms.

The American restrictions and the Russians' success in getting round them show how edgy relations remain be-

tween the former Cold War enemies over the nuclear-weapons issue. The Russians insist that they need supercomputers to verify the reliability of their nuclear stockpile, now that they have agreed to halt nuclear testing.

Russian officials refused to say precisely who sold them the computer but they did not hesitate to publicise the acquisition, perhaps calculating that they might undermine Washington's rationale for continued restrictions, according to *The New York Times*. "If we see something we can buy on the European market, we

buy it," Vladislav Petrov, the head of Public Affairs for the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy Affairs, said. He said the computer was bought for \$7 million (£4.2 million).

Under US law, American computer manufacturers are still required to obtain Washington's permission to sell their most powerful models to Russia. Last year the Clinton Administration turned down requests from both IBM and Hewlett-Packard to sell supercomputers to Moscow, amid suspicions that they would be sent to nuclear weapons design centres.

Skyscraper gunman denounced Britain

FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN NEW YORK

THE supposedly apolitical gunman who sprayed bullets into tourists at the Empire State Building on Sunday died with an angry letter in his pocket that castigated Britain, France and the United States for their support of Israel.

Ali Abu Kamal, 69, who shot himself fatally in the head on the skyscraper's 80th-storey viewing platform, appeared to harbour a grudge against the "evil big three" Western powers. The rambling letter, which was copied in English and Arabic, described them as anti-Palestinian.

It gave rise to suspicions that the shootings, in which one tourist died and six were hurt, may not have been as random as thought, nor motivated simply by Kamal's alleged loss of his life savings in an American investment. However, Howard Safir, New York's Police Commissioner, said he was continuing to view the incident as the work of a "deranged individual" rather than terrorism.

The skyscraper reopened to tourists yesterday. Metal detectors have now been placed at the entrance and security checks — an absence of which had led to criticism of the building's owners — have been introduced.

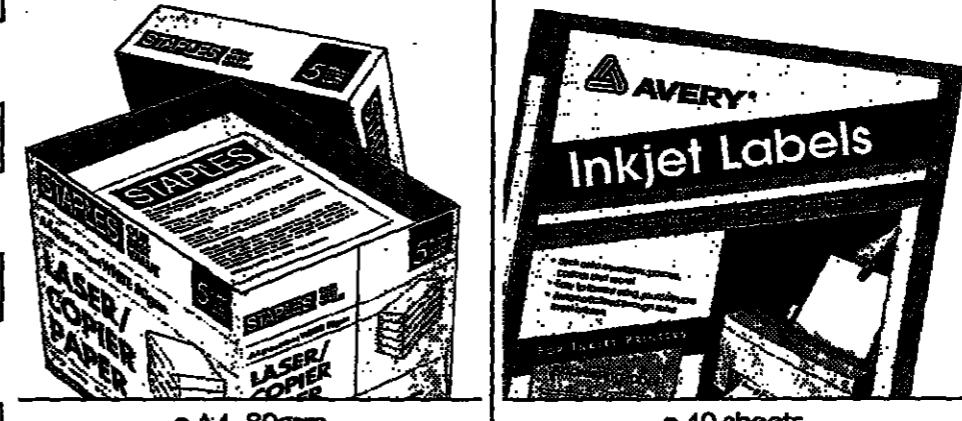
It was also reported yesterday that Kamal went to the building the day before the shooting to "case the joint". Noting that visit and the letter found on his body, a police spokesman said: "It looks very much premeditated. He had a lot of grievances against a lot of people. He was mad at the US, France and Great Britain." The letter included a "charter of honour", listing enemies on whom Kamal wanted revenge.

Investigators hope to find out how the English teacher from the Gaza Strip managed to save so much money; some reports put the amount he lost on ill-guided investments at \$500,000 (£307,000). Those who met Kamal in the days before the shooting described him as a wreck, smoking and drinking heavily, buying \$20 call-girls, eating like a hungry dog and scribbling mad messages on scraps of paper.

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I would take more exercise, but it goes against nature

The latest health campaign tells us nothing we don't know

Everyone is so cynical nowadays, so intent on seeing the worst and ridiculing the best, that I feel we should be grateful for those government bodies still isolated in their optimism about man's perfectability and their idealistic belief in our better natures.

This was perfectly illustrated yesterday by a patient, courteously conducted argument on the *Today* programme between Auberon Waugh and a man from the Health Education Authority, which this week launches a £9 million campaign to get people over 50 to take a little daily exercise.

As part of this well-intentioned campaign, posters, leaflets and advertisements are being called in to service to inform everyone that exercise exists and it is good for you. Waugh suggested that by the time people were 50, they knew these things. It's hard to disagree. The reasonable person would presume that those who fail to take exercise are not those who lack the information about it but, rather, the desire, energy or willpower to do it.

Not so the man from the HEA. For him the lazy slob is merely unenlightened and the elderly couch potato a victim of poor education: funny how all propagandists share the way they look at the world, even if the world view itself may alter. For such people, bad choices must always be ill-informed choices.

And if gentle encouragement fails, the HEA is ready with some scare stories about elderly people "so unfit they struggle to wash their hair", about old people marooned on their sofas long after the television has flickered into doleful blackness. "Once they had switched off the television, a quarter of older women did not have enough strength in their legs to get out of a chair without using their arms."

Am I missing something? Am I being insensitive about the trials of old age? But I truly can't see that needing to use your arms to get out of a sofa or chair late at night is a sign of worrying decrepitude in the elderly population. I certainly hope it isn't, because I can't be sure that I don't which myself out of the sofa as I drag myself off to bed at night, and I am but half the age of the HEA's target group.

I am sure that the health of the elderly population isn't all it could be. I am furthermore convinced that £9 million could go a great way to improve it. Poverty remains the greatest cause of ill-health among most people, and the impoverished elderly who live in cold, damp rooms which they can ill-afford to heat might well appreciate a slight redirection of funds. (And I wonder how many more old people might take up the suggestion to walk to the shops if they weren't afraid of being in the streets in the first place.)

Even from another, radically opposed perspective—the one that says, correctly,

ly, that we live longer, healthier lives than ever before—the exercise initiative is a wasteful one. But anyway, regardless of ideology, I am not sure that it ever pays to lecture to people.

This exercise campaign is no different in essence from the healthy eating campaigns that we've seen regularly. If there is anyone out there who really doesn't know that a healthy diet is one that includes fruit and vegetables, then nothing any of us says now is going to make any difference. I think it qualifies as "inversible ignorance".

Everyone knows that living on sweet biscuits and fried bread is not exactly good for you; people eat sugary, fatty, fried food because they like the taste and because it's comforting and bolstering and warming. They know better, they just don't eat better. The same is true of exercise: we all know that it's good for us; it's just that "do it, it's good for you" remains one



Nigella Lawson

of the least compelling injunctions.

I am not actually an anti-exercise fanatic. I think that it is extraordinary how much better exercise makes one feel, and not so much physically as mentally. The only thing is I can never quite remember that in advance. In advance, all I can summon up is resentful, slothful dread. Walking is probably the answer: ordinary, brisk, everyday walking. But again, much as I know it'll put a spring in my step, give me better ideas and— one hopes—better legs, none of this knowledge necessarily propels me out of doors on a blustery morning.

But this discrimination to exercise is, when you come to think about it, entirely as it should be. Any exercise taken for "health" is strictly speaking, unnecessary exercise. From a Darwinian point of view we are surely programmed thus to shun it. Whatever current notions are of health, fitness, the body beautiful, our instincts must be to conserve energy not to expend it unnecessarily. Jumping up and down in a gym or wheeling for stationary miles on an exercise bike goes against nature.

The survival of the fittest does not, after all, refer to those who spend longest at the gym, however many attempts there are to persuade us that he who's fitter lives longer.



The Spice Girls, winners of two Britpop awards at Earls Court, predictably threatened to fall out of their frocks and flashed their underwear

Pass the cocoa, Liam

The curiously respectable truth behind a night of legendary glamour and excess at the Britpop awards

It is no easy task, as Lorelei Lee might have put it, for a Girl Like I to find herself instructed to go and write about the Brit Awards. For a start, I had, before Monday, only the vaguest notion of what a Brit Award might be.

For a child of the Sixties and Seventies, I grew up in almost creepy ignorance of pop music. For ages we didn't own a telly, and then, when one did arrive, the prospect of sitting in front of it, watching *Top of the Pops* in the silent, disapproving presence of my father was a prospect too painful to contemplate.

The onset of boyfriends brought with it a crash course in contemporary music—a short, shamming flirtation with Steely Dan, rapidly abandoned in favour of the sultry beauties with attitude so beloved of the *Old Grey Whistle Test*. But then along came motherhood, and my brief stab at cool gave way to *The Wheels On The Bus* on a tape loop, and being unable to stay awake until the end of *The White Room*.

So one way and another, it was with some anxiety that I contemplated my star at the Music Industry's Glittering Awards Evening. I mean, what if I were to find myself standing next to someone from Manic Street Preachers or Blur and asking them what they did for a living? Could I be sure of being able to tell the difference between Liam and Noel Gallagher?

And most worrying of all, what on earth was I to wear to Britpop's equivalent of the Oscars. Was there a dress code? Should I find myself barred at the door for being insufficiently cool? I have spent a lifetime not trying to get into clubs in order to avoid precisely this sort of public humiliation and now here I was, face to face with it.

A glance through the pictures from last year was, frankly, not much help. Michael Jackson and Liam Gallagher attended wearing, respectively, white satin pyjamas and a football manager's sheepskin car coat. If Liam looked a shade warmly dressed for the occasion ("Take it off, do," I fear I should have found myself saying, had I encountered him, "or you won't feel the benefit when you get outside"),

Patsy Kensit looked distinctly chilly in a couple of strips of black cloth, held together across her exposed front with a little bit of string. The most consoling thing was a picture of Paula Yates looking exhausted, clearly suffering from the perennial mothers' problem of being unable to keep one's eyes open after 10.30, who had the brilliant wheeze of turning up in stars and nighties, presumably in order to be put straight into bed on returning home.

Immensely cheered by this, I settled at last on a diaphanous silk chiffon shift from Betty Jackson which, I thought, neatly combined sexiness with practicality—fully hand-washable, should I run into some 1997 reincarnation of Sid Vicious, and with plenty of room for a nice warm vest underneath. Thus clad, I followed in the Footsteps of the Stars, past the massed ranks of rauh sodden photographers at Earls Court, and took my seat for a night of legendary glamour and excess.

Except that, looking around, it all seemed curiously respectable. Acres and acres of record industry chaps in near-Armchair suits and strenuously witty ties, and women draped from neck to knee in drearily understated Jean Muir-style black-viscose-crepe-with-a-creep-sparkle. Somehow, the chances of anything louche happening seemed remote.

As a bossy man with a microphone told us all to sit down, a certain air of school outing began to pervade the proceedings. So far, the nearest thing to outrageous behaviour was the table manners of the tabloid showbiz hack to my left. Don't scratch, said I. Use your knife, not your fingers. If you want the bread, just ask. Don't lean across people like that. Dear oh dear, I get plenty of this kind of thing at home. Perhaps something more exciting would be going on among the hordes of rent-an-adolescent Young People milling sedately about below the stage.

There, indeed, my luck seemed to have changed. I found myself standing next to a fragrant vision, reeking of Giorgio, with a yard-long pigtail and a six-o'clock shadow that shaded into a complexion of Estee Lauder's finest rose-petal, who appointed herself my guide for the evening. Look, he said, there are Ant and Dec. Now that one up on the stage stuffing herself back into her frock is Sexy Spice. Oooh yes, there she was, hitching up her strapless red sequinned ball-gown with that thumbs-in-the-armpits gesture so beloved of 1950s debutantes. And next to her

was Scary Spice, looking, well, scary, in a floral negligee and Nana Mouskouri revival specs.

The Spice Girls showed their knickers and fell out of their frocks, and Mark Morrison surrounded himself with stripping policewomen and thongy from Manic Street Preachers dedicated his award to comprehensive schools everywhere but somehow the rain outside seemed to have seeped into the proceedings.

The party spirit wasn't exactly encouraged by the minatory commanding presence of Ben Elton, who these days, with his shorn head and glittering eye, resembles one of the more alarming Old Testament prophets, and who had clearly been warned, after last



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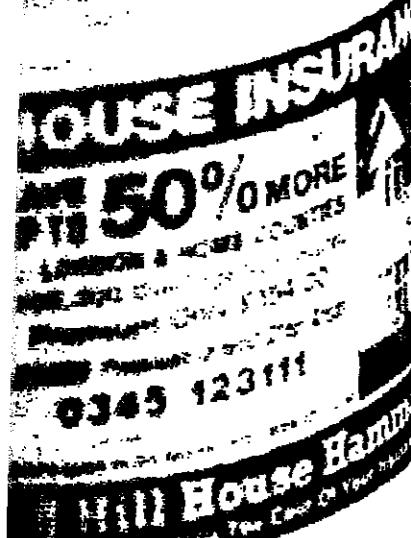
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A story of heroism that never died

John Bierman on London's tribute to a man who defied the Nazis

the 20th century—Nazism and communism. But for Mrs Singer, the unveiling has special significance. It was her parents, Tibor and Agnes Vandor, to whom Wallenberg loaned his flat in 1944.

After the war, the Vandors emigrated to Canada and tried to bury the secret of their origins. They brought Yvonne up as a Christian and tried to discourage her when she fell in love with a Jew. But she defied them and "converted" to marry him, only to discover the truth about her origins when she read a 1981 biography of Wallenberg. Today she and her husband are lecturers at Toronto's York University.

"It's a wonderful thing that at last Raoul Wallenberg is being given the honour he deserves," she said yesterday. "But what a cruel irony that having saved so many, nobody saved him. I hope this

event will push the Russians into disclosing what really happened to him."

Apparently suspecting that he was a capitalist spy, the Russians took Wallenberg to Moscow for questioning when Budapest fell to the Red Army in 1945. After denying that he was in their hands, in 1947 the Russians claimed that he had died of a heart attack in prison.

But fellow prisoners suggested that Wallenberg was alive at least into the late 1970s. His family believes that he may still be alive, aged 84, in the Gulag, the victim of a cover-up or a colossal bureaucratic bungle. That is why the Wallenberg statue is being called a monument and not a memorial.

The only members of his immediate family still alive are his half-siblings, Nina Lagergren and Guy von Dardel. Both will be present at the unveiling. The Wallenberg monument shows the Swede against a cliff wall of 100,000 "schuttpasses"—the bogus Swedish passports which he issued to Jews under threat of deportation to death camps.

John Bierman is author of the Wallenberg biography *Righteous Gentile* (Penguin Books).

Alan Coren



■ History repeats itself: the first time as sitcom, the second time as farce

I cannot describe how queer it feels, this morning, to think that even as my own fraught pen trembles above the important paper, desperately seeking the right words for an exceedingly tricky situation, HM the Queen's might a mere five miles south of mine, be doing the very same. I see her, now staring at the page before her on the desk, now staring at the drizzled garden beyond, just as I am doing, gnawing the lip, racking the brain, and reaching yet again for the gurgling percolator beside her in the earnest hope that another jolt of caffeine might do the trick.

My own earnest hope is that it will not. Because I want, when I find them, to get my words in first. I want my gracious Sovereign still to be sitting there, undecided, when, tomorrow, this column hits the streets, on the offchance that at least one of its readers might have access to at least one of her ears. Because I want to put words in her pen, before it is too late. I want it to deny assent to the Duke of York's request to allow his ex-Duchess to move back under his Sunninghill roof. I want it to explain that if the Queen did assent, then all three of them would need their heads examined. And I want it to tack on a salutary, albeit Marxist, PS, recalling history's habit, when repeating itself, of appearing the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.

Or, rather, in this case, the first time as soap opera, the second as sitcom. For that is inevitably what would happen should Sarah return, bag and baggage, to what was once dubbed Southyork by wags who saw the Legos eyesore and the marital shenanigans that went on, within it and without, as "Dallas By Appointment", serial hogwash in which the tabloid public could sluee itself, episode by preposterous episode, until the plot finally ran out of steam, and the end debits rolled.

And how we cheered when they did, and hugged ourselves, and waved our scarves, and threw our hats in the air! Had there been a pitch to run onto, we should have run onto it, because we thought it was all over. And so it seemed to be, until last weekend, when the horrifying news broke of the couple's request that the Queen allow them once more to share the same little nest, albeit in separate wings. Horrifying, since she should consent, it will not be Southyork this time around, it will be Erzanneke, because it will no longer be *Dallas*, it will be *My Wife Next Door*, it will be *Three's Company*, it will be any one of those umpteen dire sitcoms with just one sit and no com whatsoever which have for so long blighted our screens with such nudge and snigger as can be winked from nothing more than the close proximity of eyes.

Can you not taste the manna as it falls into the begging bowls of hack and paparazzo? Can you not see them creeping Berkshire's ditches, dangling in its trees, poking lenses through its knot-holes, dialling telephones from its shrubs, waving chequebooks at its tradesfolk? Do you, immersed as you have all been in the tease and innuendo of the are-they-or-aren't-they genre, not know what you would be in for? Oh, look here! An intra-red snap of a man tiptoeing a midnight lawn, who might it be, are those pyjamas, is that champagne oh, cock an ear, was that a joint giggle from one upstairs window, or merely two separate giggles from two different windows, or, hold on, might it have been two separate joint ones, the public has the right to know, let us offer that gas inspector a nice new Toyota, let us send that daily on a sunsoaked Bournemouth fortnight, let us find a big blonde for that postman, hang about, gimme them binoculars, see that washing-line, I swear those navy-issue Y-fronts hanging next to that bra, hold the front page, "Big Flap on at Sunninghill", I like it, no wait, stone me, that's him going round there with a cup, he's only run out of sugar, hasn't he, gimme that camera, remake the front page, "Andy Still Sweet on Fergie, Could it be Tea for Two?", I love it ...

And there, I fear, space compels me to leave it though, Lord knows, there are many more words to find. I must perforce lay down my pen. Praying that when Her Majesty comes to lay down hers, mine will not have been taken up in vain.

SWAMPY RETURNS
Peter Brookes

Burying the family silver

Talk of privatising the Underground is a mistake — the Government will always have to pay for it in the end

The battle lines are emerging from the fog. At the election, a radical reformist party will confront a deeply conservative one. A party almost reckless in its zest for change will oppose a party that feels the nation is bruised enough and needs a rest. The radical (or Conservative) party is in government. The conservative (or Labour) party is in opposition.

This paradox was on vivid display yesterday as the Cabinet announced that it wants to "privatise" London's Underground. The use of the word is eccentric. Selling trading companies such as British Steel, the Naafi or the Stationery Office to sink or swim in the competitive sector is one thing. Such activities were inappropriate for government and should never darken Whitehall again.

Selling the assets of a monopoly public service is different. In theory it is a perverse political act, denying taxpayers the long-term yield on assets built up at their expense. Such privatisation has become fashionable for two reasons:

A Treasury that cannot handle production and ministers who cannot run a whelk stall without failing foul of the unions or their own ambition. (Michael Howard's attempts to run prisons are hilariously documented this week by his sacked official, Derek Lewis). The only way to be free of such plagues say the privatisers, is to sell such assets to someone else.

You can sell assets, but you cannot sell politics. British Gas or Railtrack may strut in the City as private companies, but their true chairmen are the regulators. Last year the Ofgas director, Clare Spottiswoode, announced the British Gas five-year distribution plan. She, not the company's chairman, fixed its permitted rate of return, its capital spending and its charges. She had the company bound and gagged. She also cut gas prices, shifting roughly a pound a week from the pockets of shareholders to those of gas consumers. She is not accountable to anyone.

There is nothing new in the abuse of public utilities. In the 1980s, Lord Lawson treated the gas and electricity industries in the same way. He raised energy prices and used the profit to cut income tax. He called it a "negative external finance limit" and the industries howled. It was classic asset-stripping. Tony Blair intends to do the same. He calls it a utilities windfall tax. The fact is, a monopoly is a monopoly is a monopoly. As Marx said, everybody

would like one, including politicians. There is nothing new under the sun. As far as I can see, London Underground "after privatisation" will be as nationalised as before. The Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, yesterday insisted that nothing would change through ticketing, station interchanges, travelcards, concessionary fares and safety standards will all be determined by a central government regulator, as will fares. What this shadowy individual will have to do with the Tube's much-abused investment programme is unclear. Sir George has negotiated a novel deal with the Treasury. Under it, the

buccaneering underground companies in London simply demanded government money to finance further expansion. In 1993 they became the first nationalised industry. The London Passenger Transport Board was a public company, but it still had private shareholders who received dividends. Yet still it could not finance its investment. By the outbreak of war, the public company was bankrupt, saved from receivership only by re-nationalisation.

No government will risk the financial collapse of the London Tube. Sir George's company will be private only in name and constitution. It will act as a

de facto management subcontractor to his department. This is what happens to London Underground today. The company's revenue, and thus its profit, will be secure, fixed by the annual fares negotiation. London's infrastructure will ultimately remain at the mercy of the Treasury. Nothing substantive will change.

Simon Jenkins

Instead, the benefits of yesterday's decision must lie elsewhere, in whether a new board can find the efficiency savings to cover dividends and the highest cost of borrowing (above the government grant). To sceptics, utilities privatisation has become mostly an exercise in one-off labour-cost reduction. Staff are sacked, the share price rises and the monopolists settle down to "sweat the franchise". This model predicts that the service degenerates to the point where politics forces the government to intervene.

The risk of this is the greater if, as with British Rail, the monopoly is split horizontally between operators and the owner of the track and property. The operator has no incentive to make long-term investments, while the track owner has no contact with the customer. Connoisseurs of bad privatisations should study the past week on the

Waterloo to Bournemouth line. The private operator, South-West Trains, was casually sweating its franchise by laying off drivers. Railtrack was casually mending its rails during Monday's rush hour.

We are becoming wiser. In the behaviour of "privatised" monopolies: These are not private, competitive or risky industries in which companies go bankrupt and directors lose their jobs. They are "parasitic" monopolies. Government can franchise bits of them and inject elements of competition. The private entrepreneur's role can effect a swinging efficiency-drive and sell out or cash his options. The government can struggle to control him by regulation. Investment can be redefined as off-public-sector. But everybody (except the Treasury) knows that it is as secure as gilded eggs. The "security" is a public service revenue flow — and the fact that no government will ever let the service go bankrupt.

It is not privatisation that has been updated under John Major but nationalisation. This is no bad thing. Neo-nationalisation is an advance on its predecessor. The performance of most British utilities is vastly better than two decades ago, and vastly better than their continental counterparts. If the sceptics are right and this is due to a one-off cut in labour costs, so be it. Corporatism Germany has yet to find a better way of modernising its public services. Neo-nationalisation puts a new energy into public companies. Or, as the late Nicholas Ridley said, "Utilities which we have privatised are more easily controlled than when they are in the public sector."

If Whitehall dogma requires that the Underground can be modernised only extravagantly, then there is no alternative. Labour's proposal to let it follow in the City is unlikely to beat the dogma. Where successive Tory Chancellors and transport ministers have failed, Gordon Brown will not succeed. The Underground is so unloved in Whitehall that it must change its corporate status if it is to achieve even modest progress. But that is just a beginning. When the fare-slate is over and the £700 million spent, we shall be back to 1993. The begging-bowl will be out. As long as central government refuses to let Londoners pay for a new Tube network themselves, taxpayers at large will have to foot the bill. This may seem unfair. But that is what we mean by nationalisation.

For the next three months, Budapest's Jews were spared. But as the Russian forces approached, Hitler made a renewed effort to complete his final solution. An operation by SS Major Otto Skorzeny deposed Horthy, and installed a hooligan government of Hungarian Nazis. Eichmann returned to Budapest in October 1944. During these final weeks, deportation trains and gas chambers were no longer available, so death marches, drownings and shootings were instigated. Together with the Swiss diplomat Charles Lutz and Angelo Rotta, the Papal Nuncio, Wallenberg now carried out the exploits for which he is being commemorated. But the action of the Allies should not be forgotten. Every Jew who owes his life to Wallenberg, Lutz or Rotta owes it equally to Roosevelt.

Today's ceremonies may foster another illusion. The presence of ambassadors and dignitaries from Germany and Hungary, welcome as an act of reconciliation, should not blind us to the shabby way their Governments continue to treat the Jews whom Wallenberg saved. Few of the willing executioners who served in the German legation in Budapest or in the SS in 1944 were punished. Many continued their diplomatic careers. The SS police chief in Hungary, Otto Winkelmann, and the SS spy master, Wilhelm Hoettl, were rehabilitated. Skorzeny "escaped" into Allied custody, worked under CIA patronage for the Egyptian secret services, and ended by purchasing an estate in County Kildare. The head of the German legation in Budapest, Dr Veesenmayer, served less than three years of his 20-year sentence. Reporting from Landsberg Prison to Professor MacCormac, a fellow of All Souls, he asserted the destruction of Hungary's Jews "was not a matter of black or white"; the tasks of 1944 had had the aim of creating a "United Europe".

By contrast, the surviving victims have found it almost impossible to obtain recompense. Now in their seventies and eighties, some live in poverty in Hungary. Various legal technicalities have blocked claims by former slave labourers against German concerns which acted as slave masters — such as Siemens, IG Farben and Fiat. The Hungarian authorities waited nearly 50 years to make some token gestures. Nazi victims face bureaucratic mountains to obtain monehills of compensation. One survivor, who was forced into hiding in Budapest for nearly a year in 1944-5, finally obtained less than £50. Another was awarded an annuity of £22. It is still not possible to close the book on the Nazi oppressors of European Jews. Wallenberg's battle on behalf of the persecuted is not over.

Euro warmer

TEMPERATURE-SENSITIVE underpants for all schoolchildren is the aim of Eluned Morgan, 30, the Labour MEP for Mid and West Wales. Presenting a report by the European Parliament this week, Miss Morgan will say that hauling on electronic underwear could become as much a part of the schoolchild's morning routine as porridge and satchel packing.

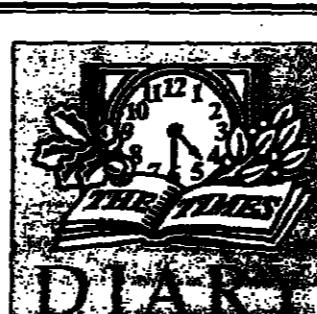
The theory is that by responding to temperature controls in the classroom, the pants can ensure that pupils are at their most

comfortable and ready to learn. Tired of being beaten round the head with square bananas and oblong sausages, the European Parliament has decided that honesty is the best policy, so it has pushed its underpants case up to the front in what is a broader report on how best to use modern technologies in the classroom. Miss Morgan believes that technology is now so advanced that children need never fail exams again.

Aside from the obvious risks of electrocution below decks, Miss Morgan is optimistic about her hot-pants for all scheme. "The future of information technology is fraught with many dangers," she says, "but also offers fantastic opportunities" I warm to her.

Family seats

WERE there an endearing moment in the Commons yesterday as a father asked his own son a question. Aside from the hand-wringing interventions of Peter Bottomley when his wife Virginia is taking questions, such family moments are rare in the House. Sir David Mitchell, the MP for Hampshire North-West, rose to



consult Andrew Mitchell, the MP for Gedling, and a junior social security minister, opening his question with the line: "Would my honourable and filial friend..."

New fancies

AN autographed manuscript of what may well be Robert Browning's last poem has cropped up and will be sold by Phillips in London next month. A meditation on the transience of life and the presence of death — Browning was not the man to go to for a drink and a filthy joke — it was found in his blotter after his death in 1889 at the Palazzo Rezzonico in Venice. Until now Browning's last poem was considered to be *Asolando: Fancies and Facts*.

This latest text is a rendering of an "Inscription on an Ancient Sundial at Newquay, Cornwall".

Sun's light is come: To each Christ's Cross in shade, doth teach — 'tis come, time, Hour!

Night brings shade: Going hence — In shade here evidence —

— 'tis gone, time, Hour!

Distractions

RIDING up the Mall in her Irish State Coach yesterday, the Queen seemed to have difficulty concentrating on her guest beside her, President Weizmann of Israel. She spent much of the journey looking concernedly over his shoulder at two dark-suited men panting in

pursuit of her wagon. Accustomed to more discreet modes of protection, she seemed both intrigued by and worried for the health of Weizmann's goons. "These things are up to the country concerned," said a reserved spokesman for the Diplomatic Protection Group.

• The race for Reigate, probably the last vacant Tory seat before the election, ungraciously left vacant by Sir George Gardiner, is down to three. Tony Fovell, Chris Butler, both former MPs, and PHS's choice, Malcolm Rixton's crisply suited special adviser, Crispin Blunt.

In your eyes

"Don't jump, Fred — we have shares in it!"



Gina Lollobrigida

abilities, and it took hours of silent tact from the film actress before he would return to his stoves after Castro left.

• Users of the 123 Laundrette in London W9 are to have their own artist in residence courtesy of the avant-garde Serpentine Gallery in Hyde Park. Sarah Cole, who photographs bras, will be holding workshops about the laundrette as a community resource for people without washing machines.

P.H.S.



Morgan: pants project

The Good Samaritan of Sweden

Wallenberg wasn't alone, says Michael Pinto-Duschinsky

When the Queen unveils the Raoul Wallenberg statue today in London's West End, it will be an appropriate memorial to a man who saved tens of thousands of lives. Aged only 32, he spent the last six months of his free life in Budapest on a mission to rescue its 200,000 Jews from the clutches of Adolf Eichmann and his Hungarian Nazi associates.

Wallenberg was able to enter Budapest on July 9, 1944, as a temporary Swedish diplomat, because his country was neutral in the war. By then 430,000 Hungarian Jews had been deported to Auschwitz in a mere eight weeks. Only the Jews of the capital remained. Six months later, when the captured city, the Soviet forces found 100,000 of Budapest's Jews alive. Many owed their lives to Wallenberg's efforts. It is to him that I probably owe my own life.

On January 17, 1945, days after the liberation, Wallenberg was summoned to meet the Soviet authorities and disappeared. The Russians have still not explained exactly how and when he died. Yet the unveiling ceremony could help to perpetuate a number of other illusions about his life. It will bring to the fore a vital question: if a single diplomat like Wallenberg could save so many, why did the Allies do so little? Why did they refuse even to bomb the railway lines to Auschwitz or to attack the Auschwitz crematoria? The accusation is summed up at Washington's Holocaust Memorial Museum. There, a single letter of August 1944 rejecting the bombing of Auschwitz is on display: it bears the signature of John McCloy, assistant secretary of the US Army.

In isolation, this document is misleading. It was the American President who in June 1944 played the decisive role in stopping the flow of Jewish deportation trains from Hungary. Had Roosevelt not acted two weeks before Wallenberg arrived in Budapest, there would have been no Jews left for him to rescue. Only on June 24, 1944 did the first thorough evidence reach Washington. The Germans were being gassed at Auschwitz. The reaction in Washington was immediate and effective. Within two days, the Hungarian Regent, Admiral Horthy, received an ultimatum. The Americans undertook to bomb Budapest unless the deportations were halted.

That very day, June 26, Horthy ordered that deportations of Budapest's Jews, scheduled for July 5, to be cancelled. British and American bombing raids over Budapest on June 29 and July 2 despatched the Hungarian leader's conviction that the Allies were in earnest. Eichmann was exiled from Budapest.

Though the British and American Air Forces later turned down the proposed bombing of the Auschwitz crematoria (a decision open to criticism), the threat to bomb Budapest had achieved the most important humanitarian objective — stopping deportations from the city.

For the next three months, Budapest's Jews were spared. But as the Russian forces approached, Hitler made a renewed effort to complete his final solution. An operation by SS Major Otto Skorzeny deposed Horthy, and installed a hooligan government of Hungarian Nazis. Eichmann returned to Budapest in October 1944. During these final weeks, deportation trains and gas chambers were no longer available, so death marches, drownings and shootings were instigated. Together with the Swiss diplomat Charles Lutz and Angelo Rotta, the Papal Nuncio, Wallenberg now carried out the exploits for which he is being commemorated. But the action of the Allies should not be forgotten. Every Jew who owes his life to Wallenberg, Lutz or Rotta owes it equally to Roosevelt.

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The Good
Samaritan
of Sweden

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 26 1997



DOWNING STREET CHAIRS

Who will sit where if Labour wins the election?

If Downing Street changes hands this year, will Downing Street change? While all the outward effort of the Labour Party is towards winning the election, much work is going on behind the scenes about how to make the office of the Prime Minister more effective for Tony Blair. As our Whitehall Editor reports today, some outlines of a Labour Number 10 can already be seen.

Planning of this kind may seem hubristic — both to superstitious supporters of Mr Blair and to Conservatives who continue to hope for reelection. But for a would-be prime minister that must be a worthwhile risk. A regular problem of incoming governments is their inability to hit the ground running. All too often they look back and rue how they wasted the first year or two in finding their way while the Civil Service ran the country for them. Advance preparation for government may prove more useful than any number of opposition policy documents.

A Prime Minister's personal style of government is a critical determinant of success. Margaret Thatcher was always a dominating personality with an encyclopedic grasp of policy detail. But her decisive and effective tenure at Number 10 owed much to having the right advisers in the right places at the right time. Sir John Hoskyns, John Redwood, and Ferdinand Mount in Downing Street, backed at different times by a broad range of outsiders, played a significant part in her rise. Eventually her ministers found her too authoritarian; had she listened at the end as she had at the beginning, she might have survived.

John Major, in response to his colleagues' concerns, made government more collegiate. His advisers became more concerned with tactics than strategy. This certainly contributed to the drift and indecision that has marked the past five years. Mr Blair is being careful in revealing his plan for doing better; he knows that many of the men and women working for a Labour victory will be working too for their own top jobs thereafter; some, he knows, will be disappointed. But one aspect of his ambition seems clear.

INTO OXFORD

The admissions reform that is failing its test

Oxford University has long been a proud home of lost causes. The latest is its scheme for increasing the proportion of state school entrants by reforming its admissions system. Two years ago the University decided to abolish its entrance examination on the grounds that it discriminated in favour of those from fee-paying schools. This argument was always rather curious; some 45 per cent of applicants exercised their right not to sit such papers. It was deemed, nonetheless, that the mere presence of a special Oxford entrance was elitist; a new system centred on A-level grades, as used by other universities, was intended to produce a more egalitarian result.

In fact, the percentage of places offered to state school students has not risen; indeed, it has slipped slightly from 43.6 per cent to 43 per cent. It will probably fall further once those who fail to achieve the requested three A-grades this summer are excluded. There are reasons for suspicion that these statistics will not shift significantly, unless supplemented by further, equally dubious, manipulation.

In so far as the nature of its intake should be a matter of concern — itself a debatable assumption — Oxford's dilemma lies less in the proportion of state school aspirants it admits than in the raw numbers of those seeking entry. The dreaming spires are still seen as intellectually and socially unattainable by very large numbers of talented teenagers. An optional entrance examination may have been part of this problem but surely not a significant source.

Whatever harm the exam may have done

in this respect was far outweighed by the benefits. It allowed academics to spot students who possessed considerable ability but had not been well taught. The allegedly progressive alternative, based on A-level and interview, allows for much less subtlety. The small section of the student population which achieves maximum marks at A-level is dominated by independent or grammar schools. These pupils can also be expected to have a sense of priorities and the strength of will to stick to them is the first prerequisite of good modern government, whatever the arrangement of the Downing Street chairs.

FUNERAL TEARS

When good men and good times are over

The Chinese leadership did its best to prevent undisciplined squads of emotion at the funeral of Deng Xiaoping. The mourners were handpicked, the crowds regimented, the ceremonies carefully staged. But not even the Communist Party could hide the overpowering emotion of Deng's distraught widow, or stifle the uncontrollable weeping by his chair-bound son. Surprisingly, such scenes of spontaneous grief were broadcast across the nation.

Widows are allowed — indeed, expected — to weep at funerals. In Western tradition, the passing of a statesman is enhanced, at least on television, by the brief but dignified brushing away of tears. How often have the merciless photographs of Jacqueline Kennedy at her husband's graveside been reproduced in history books! Even at the height of Communist secrecy about their leaders' private lives, Andropov's widow led his funeral cortege — intriguing Western analysts who had not known that the former KGB chief's wife was still alive.

Stoic, tearless obsequies, however, are peculiarly modern and European, or rather, North European. Less inhibited cultures glory in the expression of grief. Great heroes of the classical past were expected to give vent to their emotions. Achilles wept with Priam over Hector, whom he had killed in his rage, remembering his dear friend Patroclus. Niobe, "all tears", wept so much

for her sons and daughters that she turned into a pillar of stone — which still wept.

In the Middle East, wailing and ululating are the norm when menfolk depart. The Shia tradition is even more unmitigated: so frenzied were the crowds that bade farewell to Ayatollah Khomeini that order and dignity were lost, as well as the balance of the catafalque, and the body of the revered spiritual leader toppled on to the ground.

Funerals are highly ritualised occasions, times when deep-seated cultures and long-neglected religious observances forcefully assert themselves. They are an unusual combination of stylised public ceremony and spontaneous, human emotion. The second often gives force to the first, even at the expense of intrusion on the privacy of the mourners. It is, inevitably, the touch that the cameras now seek in this age of pronounced emotion. President Clinton understands this. A man never afraid to show his feelings, he knows the electoral poignancy of grief, and has, according to observers, perfected the technique of weeping with just the eye that catches the camera.

Nations often weep because they were conditioned to worship the departed as gods — such as Stalin, or Kim Il Sung. Or they may mourn the passing of an age. Some know that with the death of their patrons, the good times are over for them. In China, all these feelings came into play.

'MPs here only for the tourists'

From Mr Richard Munday

Thatcher is a better model than Major; thus a stronger Downing Street, giving more direction from the centre, is required.

Two problems are eternal at Number 10.

One is the lack of co-ordination between the political and the official sections — which often leads civil servants to be sucked into politics and political appointees into official matters. Mr Blair is known to be influenced by American models and may appoint a "chief of staff" to be a senior political link between the two. The second is the failure to raise the Prime Minister's eyes beyond the immediate week ahead; the best solution here is a cadre of outsiders, unified by commitment to the leader's ideas, who can help to identify future obstacles and opportunities.

Al this is much easier thought in Opposition than put into action in government. Success in practice often depends more on human natures than anything else.

What turf-battles might a new chief of staff fight with the head of the policy unit? Will

Allastair Campbell, Mr Blair's tough press secretary, switch smoothly from election fighter to explainer of government? Will Mr Blair find themes around which devoted Thatcher-like advisers will want to fight?

Any "project" can so easily degenerate into battles for the Prime Minister's ear.

How to reduce the traditional departmental feudalism is another familiar difficulty. Mr Blair is thinking of making the Cabinet Secretary "a whip in Whitehall", ensuring that government priorities are not lost sight of in the in-fighting. Another idea is to replace some cabinet committees with taskforces of ministers and civil servants on issues which cross departments.

None of these reforms will by themselves

make government work better. Edward Heath and Harold Wilson loved tinkering with the machinery of government, but because they had so few strategic objectives, little was achieved. A Prime Minister with a sense of priorities and the strength of will to stick to them is the first prerequisite of good modern government, whatever the arrangement of the Downing Street chairs.

Nato enlargement

From Sir Bryan Cartledge

Sir, the most depressing feature of the current debate on Nato enlargement (letters, February 12, 17) is the extent to which it is being conducted over the heads of those most directly concerned, namely the Polish, Hungarian and Czech peoples, and their democratically elected Governments. These Governments have decided that their new liberties will best be secured in partnership and alliance with the more mature and stronger European democracies.

Prominent in their historical memories are partitions (Poland, including the fourth partition in 1939), abandonment and occupation (Valta, 1945) and repression (Hungary in 1949 and 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968). Looking eastwards they can perhaps be forgiven for not fully sharing Western optimism that stable democracies are developing in Russia and Ukraine, let alone Belarus.

At Munich and at Yalta the West incurred a debt of honour to Central Europe which there is now an opportunity to redeem. But this is not just a matter of sentiment. The future stability of what, historically, has been the most unstable region of Europe would be best served by the unequivocal statement (Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty) that a threat to any of the three new democracies will be treated as a threat to the Alliance.

Russian policies, in both the Tsarist and the communist eras, have always shown readiness to observe a "stop" sign when it has been sufficiently large and legible. No legitimate Russian interest will be impaired if the sign is now erected on the eastern, rather than western, frontiers of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Yours faithfully,
BRYAN CARTLEDGE
(British Ambassador to Hungary, 1980-83; to the Soviet Union, 1985-89, Jasmine House, Holton, Oxford.)

From Captain John Dobson, RN (ret'd)

Sir, the sirens of caution about the enlargement of Nato contained in your letter and letters today are misguided. The countries of Eastern Europe clearly perceive a threat from Russia, albeit in the medium term, and this threat consists of both capability and intention.

The Russian Defence Minister, General Igor Rodionov, "the butcher of Tbilisi", is largely unrefined. He was Commandant of the General Staff Academy for a long period prior to being elevated in July 1996 to Defence Minister, and during those five years he had enormous influence over the ideology of several generations of senior officers from all Services.

This is why Russian intentions will remain worrying to those countries aspiring to Nato throughout even a benign post-Yeltsin administration. Nato should move quickly to embrace these countries before the inevitable build-up of Russian capability as its economy grows stronger.

Procrastination is by far the more dangerous alternative.

Yours faithfully,
J. DOBSON (Naval Attaché, British Embassy, Moscow, 1991-94, 151 Ashley Gardens, SW1, February 17).

Business letters, page 29

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Call to reconsider evidence proposal

From the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, and others

Sir, the proposal before Parliament under the new Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act whereby evidential material in serious criminal cases need only be retained for three years after conviction is insidious and should be dropped.

The appalling tragedy of the Bridgewater case, following the Guildford Four and Maguire cases with which we were closely involved for several years, and other similar cases, reveals the persisting inability of our criminal justice system to root out and remedy genuine miscarriages of justice at an early stage.

We hope the new Criminal Cases Review Commission will prove itself capable of getting to the truth in such cases more quickly and thereby help

to restore the battered reputation of our Criminal Appeals system.

But the Commission cannot even begin this formidable task unless all the evidence in cases which may be referred to it in future has been conscientiously preserved. The convictions of the Guildford Four and the Maguires would never have been quashed if such a three-year rule had been applied.

To introduce one now would be irresponsible beyond belief. We urge the Home Secretary to think again.

Yours faithfully,
BASIL HUME,
ROY JENKINS,
MERLYN-REES,
SCARMAN,
Archbishop's House,
Westminster, SW1.
February 24.

Ways to preserve our grand houses

From Mr Michael Herbert

Sir, May I make two points arising out of Simon Jenkins's admirable piece, "Stately homes of England in the lurch" (February 22).

First, I doubt whether today's owners struggle through "long and lonely" weekdays, as did their forefathers in the 1930s and after the last war. Since the Historic Houses Association was founded by Lord Montagu and others in 1973, greater sympathy has been shown by successive governments towards the real difficulties of owners. As a result, I believe that the families named by Mr Jenkins — and many others — can reasonably look forward to passing on to their successors a relatively comfortable inheritance.

Secondly, the grand house is by no means a British monopoly. In many other European countries, from Spain to Sweden, these houses and estates have suffered — and often continue to suffer — at least as badly from changed economic conditions and from crushing taxation. Nevertheless a study of the awards made in recent years by Europa Nostra, a European heritage body on the council of which I serve, vividly illustrates the successful efforts made by owners all over Europe to match the widely admired British contribution.

Yours sincerely,
M. HERBERT,
18 Eaton Place, SW1.
February 22.

From Mr A. C. Tinsley

Sir, Simon Jenkins is right to endorse the salvation of stately homes, but I question the need to polarise the issue as being a choice between old houses and new ones, in favour of the latter.

Without the original house as their focus, many of the adjoining parks, warehouses, outbuildings and pleasure gardens which have been lost to us through fire, dry rot, window tax or the agricultural restrictions of the 1870s and 1930s would have been left to decay even further. Such estates frequently offer the best opportunity for the construction of a new house on the scale of its predecessor.

An average of only one new stately home per English county per decade has been built since the Second World War. A less restrictive policy, especially in regard to the old sites, but still with the highest requirements of architectural merit, would bring new money to the restoration of what remains.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY TINSLY,
Narborough Hall,
King's Lynn, Norfolk.
February 22.

Insurers and gene tests

From Mr Peter J. Firth

Sir, I fail to see how the insurance companies can benefit themselves by demanding gene test results [letters, February 22, article, Mind and Matter, February 24].

When all the dust has settled — in, say, ten years' time — any uninsurable underclass will be countervailed by an overclass of thoroughly insurable people who will be attractive to competitive insurers and will therefore gain insurance at lower rates.

Overall, neither premiums nor the insurance companies' profits will rise as a result of this change. All that will be achieved is reduced rates for the majority, enhanced accuracy of the insurers' statistics — and continued oppression of the underclass.

Yours sincerely,
PETER J. FIRTH,
1 Curzon's Row,
Lace Green, Princes Risborough,
Buckinghamshire.
February 19.

Tiny Charles

From Mr John Mansfield

Sir, As Charles Dickens obviously did not want any commemorative statue [letters, February 21] and left Portsmouth, his birthplace, at the age of two, why not compromise?

His ghost might be placated, even amused, if his fan club at Portsmouth University had a statue made of baby Dickens as he toddled away to learn to write.

It could give Portsmouth a better perspective on its literary legacy.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MANSFIELD,
135 Dalling Road, W6.
February 25.

Clap track?

From Mr Tony Killeen

Sir, As a born-again Christian, failed Anglican, and occasional rail traveller, I sometimes find myself becoming confused between the subjects of some of your letters ("End of the line", "Church clippings", etc, February 22).

If I've got this right, then the 1662 Service is South West Train jargon for the delayed 4.59.

Yours sincerely,
TONY KILLEEN,
202 Bishop Road,
Bishopston, Bristol.
February 24.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

Chayw 150

Television viewers improve with age

You'd think that they would see the joke, but no, terrestrial television chiefs are in hot pursuit of the audience least interested in watching television, and the smallest. I refer to young adults. With better things to do than sit in front of the box, this desired bunch probably doesn't even notice that TV is being redesigned to catch its preoccupied eyes.

The age beyond which the viewer becomes unwanted varies with statistics. Sometimes, it is 45, as in Channel 5's description of its target audience as the 16-45s. Of course, CS acknowledges that middle age is a state of mind and that all viewers are welcome. As Dawn Airey, 53, girlishly aggressive programme director, told a questioner at the Royal Television Society's dinner last week: "You're not an old fart. You'll enjoy our channel."

Often, the limit is lower, with the desired viewer even being 35. If the senior half of the national TV audience were an ethnic group, the disapprovals voiced against it would be a case for the Commission on Racial Equality. Just last week, the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising noted sorrowfully that "ITV's age profile is slipping once again." To advertisers, "slipping" means up, not down. The ITV audience is conspicuously older than that of the other channels (in peak time 42.4 per cent of its viewers are 55 or older) and - bad news for advertisers - tend to be poorer.

ITV returned that, as its peak time audience is the biggest of all the four terrestrial channels, it can boast more of every age group. It is also gaining in the upper-income groups. Is there not a demographic moral escaping the channel combatants? The older audience is the more desirable one. For commercial channels, those who have the money to buy the cars, computers, foreign holidays and long-distance telephone calls advertised on TV are those whose children are off their hands and who have paid off their mortgages. For the BBC, they are those with the attention span to devote to its science, history and classic-drama programmes.

The BBC, the demographer from Mars might think, should be immune from the cult of youth. It does not have to sell space to advertisers and all ages equally pay the licence fee. It knows that its programmes reach the older viewers. Last year BBC2 put out a series for the elderly last year called *The Third Age*, which advocated community

service, ballroom dancing and even sex for pensioners, and ended with the sweet-sour news that by the year 2030 there's a good chance that many Britons will live to the age of 12.

So everything should be set for the BBC to roll with the population trends towards the greying audience. But that is not how the corporation sees the future. It too must tilt towards youth. It too seems about to redesign its news to appear to be less authoritarian, younger and more related to the lives of viewers.

Now it is understandable that any broadcaster is concerned with wooing tomorrow's audience. As every newspaper owner knows, there is no joy in having a million readers if many of them are not going to last the winter; the next generation must be attracted. But not with a mirror of their own world. One of the benefits of growing older is the realisation of not living in a world of one; either of one person or one country.

Airey has been accused of thinking that today's young are a breed apart from the older generation. Yet in one sense it is right to diagnose an absolute gap between youth and age, marked by technology, sex and financial insecurity.

Tomorrow's greying adults will be

totally at ease with hundreds of television channels. They will be less worried about sexual scenes on television, less likely to flood the various complaints bodies with objections to this word or that, and less given to writing to Radio 4 to protest about the sloppy pronunciation of "secretary" for "secretary".

But some human processes are eternal. Tomorrow's over-45s will be maturer and wiser than they were in their thirties. They will see themselves as part of the human race, not just of their age group. Their horizons will broaden as their children move around the globe more freely than they themselves ever could. And, as they face the prospect of living for a century, they will be tolerant of aging, happier to take their news from someone who looks like Trevor McDonald and whose face carries more memory of the past than from a born-yesterday such as CS's 27-year-old Kirsty Young. And they will be conscious of their numbers: grey power. They will be unquestionably the majority audience and what they will want is not television for protracted teenagers but television for grown-ups.



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THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE LISTENER

THE NEWS BEHIND THE HEADLINES



Two new recruits for Radio 2

FEEDING speculation that Radio 2 is out to steal even more listeners from Radio 1, the station has poached Richard Allinson, the early morning presenter on Capital FM, Radio 1's big rival.

New radio audience figures show that Radio 2, which already employs Steve Wright, a former Radio 1 DJ, has overtaken Radio 1 for only the second time in its history. An estimated 300,000 of its new listeners are believed to have been picked up from Radio 1. And in a further sign of Radio 2's drive for younger listeners, it has hired "whispering" Bob Harris from GLR, the BBC's local London station.

Picture imperfect
THE Bridgewater Three's release caused problems for photographers as they jostled outside the Appeal Court to capture the first moment of

freedom for James Robinson, Michael Hickey and Vincent Hickey. After 18 years in jail there were a few problems identifying them. One snapshot seemed to be confusing one of the Hickey cousins with *The Express'* gossip columnist, asking loudly: "Which one's William Hickey?" Confusion reigned at the *Evening Standard*, where a chap with a moustache and crewcut, who had earlier been led into court for a completely different case, found himself

identified as Michael Hickey and his photograph slapped on the front page.

Tina's arena

THE imminent departure of Tina Gaudoin from the deputy editor's chair at *Tatler* will cause further headaches for Jane Proctor, its editor, who has seen half a dozen senior staff leave in as many months. Gaudoin is to be the editor of a new fashion and lifestyle women's magazine inspired

by the men's magazine *Arena*.

Is this the start of a trend? First there were glossy fashion and lifestyle women's magazines. Then publishers dreamt up glossy fashion and lifestyle magazines for men. These have proved so successful that they, too, are now being copied. For women. This autumn, Waggoner is to launch a magazine based on its men's title. Gaudoin says: "It will not be identical to *Arena*, but it will be a thought-provoking, glossy fashion monthly."

Jaspan's mistake

ANDREW JASPAN'S bullish reputation is being revised since he modestly denied any responsibility for the soaring circulation of *The Big Issue*, of which he is publisher and managing director.

Despite the magazine's success, Jaspan was downbeat when addressing a News Society conference in Brighton. He said: "I remember Warwick Brindle [then Jaspan's boss] telling me I was making the biggest mistake of my life leaving *The Scotsman* after only six months to edit *The Observer*. I guess you were right, Warwick."

Sale of the Central

YOU might think that Central Television, with a cash bid for the licence of just over £2,000, had enough money in its coffers. Even so, the station, whose productions include *Sharp* and *Inspector Morse*, has decided in auction off virtually the entire contents of its Broad Street, Birmingham HQ after its imminent move to a swanky £15 million building in Gas Street. More than 8,000 lots will be flogged.



Scalextric: two days to make it sexy

Style rather than stars

FIVE leading creative directors have dramatically reopened the debate about style versus content in advertising by placing a double-page ad in *Campaign*. Costing an estimated £5,000, the ad reads: "We would like to remind the D&AD jury... that it is ideas that move people, not techniques."

The ad coincides with this week's opening of judging for the Design & Art Direction awards. It refers to debate that has come to a head with the advent of ever-more sophisticated technology and star directors.

Tim Delaney - creative director of Leagas Delaney and signatory and former D&AD president - says: "We are trying to make the jurors aware that it's not who's done the ad or what

ADVERTISING

it looks like that is important, it's the idea. It's bad for the industry to be seduced by form."

IT APPEARS that advertising practitioners never tire of teaching their clients how difficult their job is. Lowe Howard-Spink jumped on the bandwagon this week by holding a two-day educational session for the benefit of 25 clients and new business prospects.

Marc Cave, Lowe's assistant managing director, insists: "It was not about showing clients how hard we work but about educating them to understand the process and to come up

with good briefs for us." The clients were divided into several groups and briefed to create a relaunch for Scalextric, the car game, in two days - slightly less time than the average agency would have.

THE Advertising Standards Authority has become involved in more controversy - over an ad for Hamilton House, the direct-mail company. Hamilton says the ASA disclosed confidential information about the company when investigating an objection by Dudley Jenkins, rival operators, to Hamilton's claim that it had more than 50 per cent of the market.

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INTELLIGENT THINKING

Free speech – use it or lose it

Journalists, by and large, have a fairly poor reputation, but I have come to believe that people who view investigative journalists in particular as being several steps beyond the pale often have something to hide. They will tell you their rights are being abused while they abuse the rights of others. They will tell you that investigative journalists are trying to usurp the system, even to pervert the course of justice.

The point that is often lost, however, is that journalists sometimes pursue stories precisely because "the system" or "British justice" has let down the very people they ought to be protecting. Investigative journalists are not perfect, but then neither is the society they report on. Much ails the body politic which cannot heal itself, even if it does acknowledge an illness. Many is the case we have followed, not to act as a self-appointed surrogate police force, not to usurp the due process, but as a direct result of the failure of that process, or because the system itself has been manipulated by one special interest group. An investigative article or programme often serves as a "court of last resort" and as such is hardly likely to earn the approval of the Establishment.

Sadly, there seem to be fewer regular outlets for quality investigative journalism these days. Do we think society is now well enough protected and regulated to settle back into snug silence? What is the point of a free press if that freedom

The ability to investigate and expose injustice is priceless, says Roger Cook

isn't fully used? The ability to investigate and to expose injustice, bureaucratic bungling and outright criminality is surely priceless. Use it, or lose it they say, and that's especially true of Britain where freedom of speech is not a statutory right, and secrecy is a way of life for those who govern us. The system is not infallible (look at the mess made of the Stephen Lawrence case – with the result that his killers will probably escape scot-free). Where would the Bridgewater Three be now without the efforts of investigative journalists such as Paul Foot and David Jessie?

Investigative journalism is an expensive and time-consuming business, which is perhaps why now it is often replaced by the pseudo exposé, where presumption and assumption have superseded the search for hard facts. Bearing in mind that the ultimate bias is in the selection of the subject in the first place, every effort ought to be made to be fair thereafter. "Balance" is something else. In the real world, giving equal space or airtime to a phlibustering fraudster is about as useful as a chocolate teapot.

There are many pitfalls – legal

and ethical – when conducting an investigation. Will what you do genuinely preclude a fair trial? When does a pro-active approach become incitement? Is your research fireproof? Does what you propose exposing really matter to the person in the street, or is it for the esoteric edification of the inhabitants of a few square feet of the Square Mile? The list goes on. And it is beginning to look as if we may need more protection from those allegedly protecting us. You have probably heard stories about the security firms who run protection rackets or the policemen who run burglars.

You cannot learn everything about investigative journalism in a classroom, but you cannot do it properly without the right ground rules. That is why the masters degree course in investigative journalism launched tomorrow by Nottingham Trent University is bound to be a worthwhile venture.

Students will be introduced to "investigative field craft" – how to follow miscreants without their knowing, or how to use hidden cameras and microphones, how and when to operate an undercover "sting" (set-up) or read a balance sheet to reveal criminal activity.

In short, freedom of speech must be used to be preserved – but if it is abused by poor investigative journalism, both will become devalued.

• Details of the MA in Investigative Journalism are available from Nottingham Trent University on 0115 948 6335/6077



Roger Cook and team: "Many is the case we have followed as a result of the failure of due process, or because the system has been manipulated"

Changing sides: How the Tory press has fallen

The Tory press is no longer, at least among newspaper readers. Only four national papers have a majority of readers who say they support the Tories, compared with nine daily and Sunday papers which did at the time of the 1992 general election.

The Times has become the most representative broadsheet. The political views of its readers are now nearer those of the electorate as a whole than its main competitors.

The four Tory bastions remain the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph*, *The Express* and *The Express on Sunday*. By contrast, 75 per cent or more of the readers of *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Mirror* and *The Sunday Mirror* say they back Labour.

This is shown by a detailed analysis by MORI of the political views of newspaper readers between the 1992 election and the whole of 1996 from nearly 70,000 interviews.

Support for the two main parties has changed dramatically over the past five years. There has been a swing of 17.5 per cent from Tories to Labour since the 1992 election. Tory support has dropped by 15 percentage points, with Labour up 20 points, while the Liberal Democrats' rating has

fallen by five points. The polls also reveal a rise from 6 to 10 per cent in those saying they will not vote. This could point to a rise in people staying at home and the lowest turnout since World War Two.

The striking feature of the latest analysis is the large variation between papers. In particular, the swing from the Tories to Labour among read-

ers of *The Times* was 26.5 per cent between 1992 and last year. This reflects a combination of a change of voting intentions among long-term readers of *The Times* and the more than doubling in

paper's circulation over the period.

MORI has devised a partisanship index which measures the support of readers of papers for the various parties relative to the national distri-

bution of voting intentions. Thus, an index rating of 1.00 is exactly in line with the national average. A reading above 1.00 means that support for a party is above the national average; below 1.00 below average.

On the basis, support for Labour among readers of *The Times* has moved from 0.43 in 1992 to 0.78 last year. By contrast, the Tory index has declined from 1.49 to 1.39. In percentage terms, 39 per cent of readers of *The Times* say

they support the Tories, and 43 per cent Labour. In 1992, the shares were 64 and 15 per cent respectively.

By contrast, party support among readers of other broadsheets has become more polarised. The Tory partisanship index among readers of *The Daily Telegraph* has risen from 1.67 to 1.93 since 1992. There has been a swing to Labour among its readers, but support for the party is still much lower than among voters generally, with a partisan-

ship index of 0.51, against 0.31 in 1992.

Among the tabloids, the biggest switches in party support have occurred among readers of previously strongly pro-Tory papers such as *The Sun* with a 22 per cent swing and the *Daily Mail* with a 20.5 per cent swing.

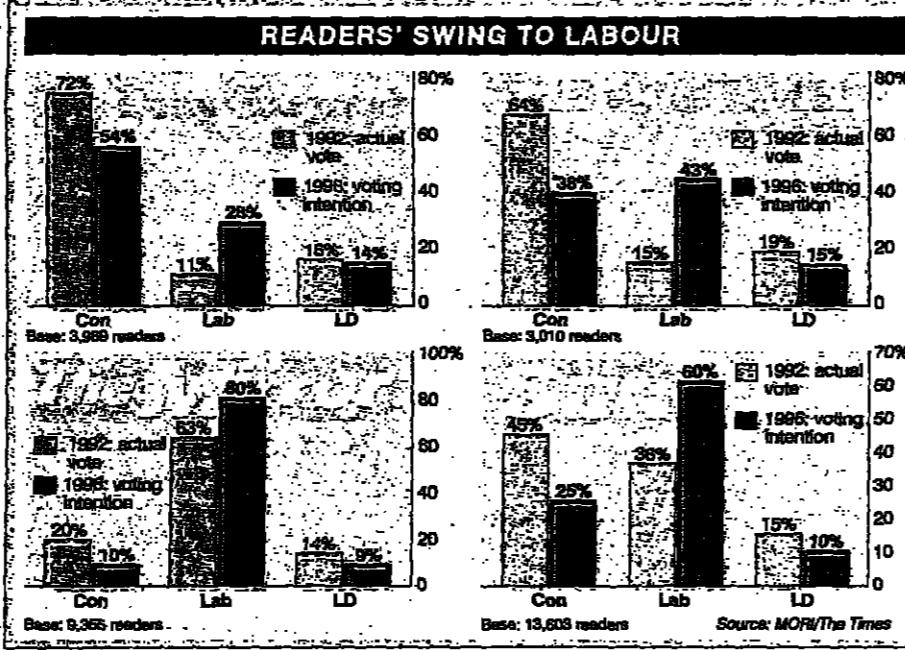
In 1992, the political preferences of readers of *The Sun* were very close to those of the electorate as a whole and this is still broadly true, although Sun readers have become slightly less Tory.

The readership of the *Daily Mail* is still predominantly Tory. Some 46 per cent of its readers back the Tories and 36

per cent Labour. Its Tory partisanship index, measuring support relative to the national average, has risen from 1.51 to 1.64 since 1992, while its Labour index has risen from 0.40 to 0.65.

In the Sunday papers, the biggest swings from Tories to Labour have been among readers of *The Independent on Sunday* and *The Sunday Times*. The Tory partisanship index has risen since 1992 among readers of *The Express on Sunday*, *The Mail on Sunday*, and *The Sunday Telegraph*.

• Robert Worcester is chairman of MORI and Peter Riddell is political columnist of *The Times*.



Good news, bad news and the headline grabbers

Durants, the press cuttings agency which reads nearly 200,000 newspapers and magazines a year for clients and where their companies are reported, has started to monitor in detail the subjects covered in the British press. It offers some fascinating insights into the subjects and personalities deemed newsworthy by editors.

The first Durants report shows that only weeks before the general election Tony Blair is cruising ahead of John Major in the spin doctors' battle to grab headlines. Analysing the 10 national newspapers and six regionals (in Edinburgh, Liverpool, Cardiff, Norwich, Portsmouth and Birmingham), it shows that the Labour leader had nearly twice as much coverage as Major in the past month – and that Labour got 10 times as much as the Conservatives.

David Reeds, the Durants' press researcher, also analysed whether headlines were positive or negative. He found almost all the coverage of the Conservatives was negative, compared with just under half the reporting of Labour. Although the Liberal Democrats achieved more party political coverage than the Tories, it was mostly negative.

When he was given the task of reading all the national papers every day, Reeds assumed that he would find they were full of

PAPER ROUND

Brian MacArthur



"bad" news. They were not, even though he was surprised at the amount of negative coverage of overseas news. "I got the impression that we don't like abroad very much, though that was much truer of the tabloids than of the broadsheets," he says.

Still surprising, even to journalists, is the space given to sport. It received almost twice as many column centimetres as the economy, which was second in the table of "headline grabbers".

Apart from science (16th), sport was the only subject where Reeds considered there was more positive than negative coverage.

After sport and the economy, the most newsworthy subjects in the past month were politics, crime, the arts, health, education, Europe and transport. Sex and royalty were 13th and 14th. News about the weather came last.

On personalities, Blair received marginally less coverage than Diana, Princess of Wales, with Major fourth behind Sarah, Duchess of York but above Michael Atherton, Prince Charles, Tim Heyman, the Queen and Richard Branson.

NEWSPAPER commentators seeking controversy by inviting former editors to attack the *Daily Mirror* have always failed. Roy Greenstadt has been a fierce critic but Hugh Cudlipp, Mike Molloy and Richard Stott have refused to be drawn into making any criticism – at least publicly – of their successors. Even during John Pilger's demolition job on the modern *Mirror* last week, Cudlipp made no direct attack on editor Piers Morgan or chief executive David Montgomery.

Molley, however, came out of the closet this month and delivered a swinging attack on *The Mirror* in the *New Statesman*. The paper (revamped last month) was mired in sexual trivia and obsessed by the triumphs and excesses of a sub-world inhabited by Stringfellow celebrities, he said. Montgomery had no empathy for *Mirror* readers and did not understand newspapers.

Morgan hit back in *The Guardian*. He pointed out that when Pilger joined the *Mirror* in 1963, its sale was

4,730,000; when he left in 1985 it was 3,100,000. Everywhere he went, journalists talked in hushed tones of the glory days of the *Mirror* – but had the *Daily Mirror* been quite the paper its former editors contended?

What about the front page splash in February 1959 devoted to a five-column picture of a bulldog at a microphone from a National Pets Club lunch and carried over to page 3 under the headline "Woof! Woof!"? Or all the pictures of girls he found in issues selected at random from the 1960s? And what, too, about the modern *Mirror*'s campaigns for Hillsborough veterans, Royal British Legion veterans, VAT on fuel, Rwandan refugees or a knife amnesty?

Older journalists always look back to golden ages but few had to deal with the grueling competition faced daily by the editors of the 1990s. As Morgan pointed out, 30,000 *Mirror* readers die every year, and he needs to attract new, younger readers or get fired.

The *Mirror* seems to be increasing its coverage of the Labour Party as the election approaches and also publishing a few longer reads. On Monday, too, it named the man it claimed was really guilty of murdering Carl Bridgewater – but was that, as its critics say, simply an attempt to catch up with the *Daily Mail* which has named five men as murderers? The jury remains out.

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CHANGING TIMES

THE TIMES TODAY

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 26 1997

NEWS

Brown plans independent Bank

■ Gordon Brown will today announce the first steps a Labour government would take towards creating an independent Bank of England. He intends to change the personalised links between the Governor and Chancellor that created the so-called "Ken and Eddie show".

He wants to set up two new bodies to give him a much broader range of advice: a monetary policy committee, chaired by the Governor, that would formulate the Bank's advice, and a council of advisers for the Treasury Pages 1, 8

Billie-Jo's foster father released

■ The foster father of Billie-Jo Jenkins, the murdered schoolgirl, was released on police bail last night to return to Hastings police station in five weeks' time. Sian Jenkins, 39, was arrested on Monday and questioned for 36 hours Page 1

BBC accused

The BBC was accused of political bias for giving a Radio 4 broadcaster five months paid leave to fight a seat for Labour Page 1

Divorce and pensions

Plans to allow divorcing couples to split their pensions at the time they break up will be unveiled in a White Paper. But the proposals will not be retrospective and are unlikely to come into effect until 2000 Page 1

Queue for Tube

Railtrack and Virgin headed the queue of companies lined up to bid for the London Underground after the Government confirmed that the network will be privatised Page 2

Cloning humans

The British scientists at the centre of a successful experiment to clone a sheep with DNA taken from an adult animal said the same techniques could possibly be used on humans Page 3

Liberation

Patricia Williams, the black feminist, delivering the Reith Lecture on racism argued that the liberal idea that "colour does not matter" was flawed Page 4

Princess's clothes

Some of the 80 designer dresses belonging to Diana, Princess of Wales, which are to be sold at auction were displayed at Christie's in London Page 7

Kosher banquet at the Palace

■ Buckingham Palace went kosher when the Queen entertained President Ezer Weizman to a banquet at the start of the first state visit by an Israeli head of state. Part of the Palace kitchens were given over to Tony Page, London's leading Jewish caterer, to prepare the evening's menu for about thirty of the guests who insisted on strict dietary law Page 1



Carol Holmer leads her pony Turnip from his flooded field yesterday after a night of storms in Burford, Oxfordshire. Page 2

BUSINESS

NatWest: Shares in National Westminster bank have recovered from a fall in pre-tax profit and that it had pulled out of the race to take over Scottish Amicable Page 25

House buying: House buyers and sellers could both face paying the other side's legal and mortgage costs if they back out of a deal without good reason before exchanging contracts Page 25

Barings: A former senior director of Barings, which crashed in 1995 after Nick Leeson ran up \$800 million losses, has been disciplined by a City watchdog Page 25

Markets: The FTSE 100 index rose 13.6 to 4344.7. Sterling's index rose from 97.7 to 98.0 after rises from \$1.635 to \$1.642 and DM2.7270 to DM2.7386 Page 43

Germany: Germany's militant anti-nuclear activists are preparing for the country's biggest showdown on atomic waste by attacking the railway network Page 14

Princess's clothes

For the first time, a donor in the fundraising scandal that is swamping President Clinton was shown to have an official link to the Chinese Communist Government Page 15

Communist link

For the first time, a donor in the

fundraising scandal that is

swamping President Clinton was

shown to have an official link

to the Chinese Communist

Government Page 15

Motorway

before future fares Page 7

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What do these men have in mind for the Barbican?
PAGES 33-35



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Building trade feels the pressure of VAT
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Shearer ruled out of Uefa Cup ties by surgeon's knife
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 26 1997

Shares decline by 36p as bank stays silent on buyback programme

NatWest hit by cost of restructuring

By MARIANNE CURPHAY

SHARES in NatWest dropped 36p to 765p after the bank reported huge restructuring costs and gave no indications of when it might begin a new programme of buying back shares.

The high street bank, which is in the middle of a radical branch closure programme, also revealed that it had dropped out of the bidding for Scottish Amicable, the mutual life company.

Derek Wanless, chief executive, confirmed that he had signed a confidentiality agreement to inspect the mutual's finances, but decided the price tag was too high and withdrew on Monday. This now leaves five bidders still interested in Scottish Amicable ahead of Friday's closing date for offers.

The bank gave warning that it was becoming more cautious on lending to small businesses, property and construction companies, which it regards as high-risk in the current economic climate.

In the late 1980s high street banks suffered large losses when they lent to some small businesses that collapsed during the recession. Mr Wanless said: "It is the time in the economic cycle when bad lending decisions are made."

Lord Alexander of Weeton, chairman, said: "We see the pace of growth slowing in 1998 and are adopting a more cautious approach to lending." Surplus capital would be returned to shareholders, he

said, but gave no indications of when this might be. Some analysts had expected the bank to announce that it would spend £220 million buying back a further 28 million shares.

Pre-tax profit for the group in 1996 was £1.12 billion, down from £1.75 billion in 1995. This figure included a gain of £224 million from the sale of investments in the venture capital group 3i, and losses of £719 million from the disposal of subsidiaries, including £60 million from Bancorp in the United States and £186 million relating to the redesign of the retail bank.

NatWest has set a target of

reducing its retail branches to 1,750 and its staff by 10,000 over the next three to four years. The bank closed 302 branches last year and now has 1,921 still operating. Staff numbers have been reduced by 2,900, to 32,400, since 1995 at a cost of £95 million in redundancy payments.

Mr Wanless declined to comment on reports that NatWest was seeking £10 million compensation from Tesco in a dispute over the loyalty card service it provided.

He revealed that the group will spend an extra £100 million this year to upgrade its technology, plus £100 million over the next two years on

No bill for Tesco, page 27



Lord Alexander, NatWest chairman, flanked by Richard Delbridge, left, chief finance officer, and Derek Wanless, group chief executive, at the bank's art gallery in the City

Hughes sees future in The Mirror

PENNY HUGHES, pictured, former president of Coca-Cola Great Britain & Ireland, was yesterday made a non-executive director of Mirror Group (Morag Preston writes).

A key figure in the 'cola wars', Ms Hughes left the fizzy drinks corporation in January 1995 before having a baby. For a fee of £30,000, she will work 25 days a year for Mirror Group, publisher of *The Mirror*, and it is expected that she will sit on the audit committee.

Ms Hughes, who is in her mid-thirties, is also a non-executive director of Next, Berisfords and The Body Shop. She was on the board of the beauty *Proprietary* last year when a decision was made not to take the company private.



Wimpey expecting a peak year

By PAUL DURMAN

GEORGE WIMPEY, the UK's biggest house builder, yesterday said that it expects 1997 to be a year in the housing market, as it reported doubled pre-tax profits of £31.5 million.

Last year's profit was the highest since 1990, but Wimpey expects substantially more this year. Some City analysts expect profits to double again, to about £60 million.

Joe Dwyer, chairman, said that Wimpey had enjoyed buoyant trading in the first eight weeks of this year. He said that rising house prices are feeding through to the new homes market. "In the last quarter of 1996, the recovery in the housing market started in earnest," he said.

Mr Dwyer expressed little concern about the effect of the forthcoming general election. He said: "There may be a small hiatus, perhaps a week or two either side of the general election, but otherwise the market should remain good."

Wimpey's recovery last year was aided by its deal with Tarmac, swapping its construction and minerals businesses for McLean Homes. This has left Wimpey concentrated on housebuilding, with scope for savings from increased purchasing power.

McLean Homes contributed £45.7 million of operating profits on £492 million of sales, completing 5,957 sales at

an average price of £84,000.

Wimpey Homes contributed profits of £20 million (£28.3 million) on reduced sales of £419.8 million. Private housing sales fell from 5,802 to 5,018, leading to a fall in margins. Wimpey blamed this on a "tired" product range. It has introduced new designs, incorporating space-saving features in kitchens and bath-

rooms and offering more variety in external appearance.

In the US, Morrison Homes

continued to expand rapidly,

completing 1,400 sales.

Although it lost £2.2 million last year, it is now making profits.

Wimpey was held back by

£20 million of interest payments on debts that ended the year at £178 million, up from

£165 million the year before.

Earnings per share re-

bounded from 1.6p to 5.84p.

A final dividend of 3.5p is due on May 8. This maintains the total at 5.5p, and is just covered by earnings.

Tempus, page 28

Labour proposes penalties for broken house deals

By SARA MCCONNELL

HOUSEBUYERS and sellers could both be faced with paying the other side's legal and mortgage costs if they back out of a deal without good reason before exchanging contracts.

Labour yesterday outlined proposals to tackle the practice of gazzumping by means of a costs guarantee agreement. This would compel each side to pay the other's costs as well as their own as the penalty for withdrawing from a prospective sale between the acceptance of an offer and exchange of contracts. This would "act as a deterrent to gazzumping while

not imposing unduly rigid controls on the market".

Under such a system buyers and sellers could be required to put up a pre-contract deposit, against which either side could claim costs if the other backs out.

Gazzumping, where a seller agrees a price then goes back on it because he has been offered a better one, is growing as the housing market improves and prices rise.

Labour's plans closely mirror voluntary proposals to tackle gazzumping announced last week by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Under the RICS

scheme, penalties would be linked to the purchase price on top of the seller's costs.

Other measures being canvassed by Labour include the extension of "lock-out agreements", whereby buyers and sellers agree to be bound by an agreed timetable.

Labour also raises the possibility of introducing the Scottish system of house-buying to England. In Scotland, buyers submit bids and the deal is binding once a bid is accepted. But Scottish buyers incur more upfront costs and can find themselves forced to take out expensive bridging loans.

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Jobs threatened as Union goes on sale

By ADAM JONES

A DRAMATIC restructuring at Union Plc, the financial services and trading group, put the company on the market yesterday. The changes also end the group's historic role as a discount house supplying liquidity to the banking system.

The group, founded in 1885, said it is pulling out of proprietary trading and

announced the departure of George Shulden, chief executive, and Ian Martin, managing director, as part of a wide cost-cutting exercise.

Graeme Knox, chairman, is to temporarily take over as executive chairman. A "substantial programme of redundancies" among Union's 170 staff is expected.

Union said the board has received several unsolicited takeover approach-

es in the last few weeks. A company statement added: "The interests of shareholders could be best served through a takeover."

Shareholders include Joe Lewis, the billionaire financier, who owns 24 per cent. Shares closed 8.5p up at 95p.

Union said yesterday that 1996 operating losses were estimated at £1.7 million, despite a first-half pre-tax profit of £3.4 million. Mr Knox said

that 1996 interim had been swelled by a pension fund surplus.

After diversifying disastrously into leasing and property lending in the 1980s, the group is now active in the football sector as adviser to seven clubs. Its main businesses are UFM, a liquidity manager, and Union CAL, a derivatives broker. Talks to sell Aitken Campbell, its equity market-maker, are advanced.

Kvaerner may close Govan if it loses order

By GEORGE SIVELL

KVAERNER, the Norwegian shipbuilding and engineering group, is likely to close the Govan yard on the Clyde if it fails to win a big order. Closure of the yard would cost 1,400 jobs.

Kvaerner, which is now managed in London, said that it expects a decision on a big order later this week or early next week. If it fails to win it, Kvaerner said, it is "likely to close the yard". However, the group added: "We are working hard to seek opportunities for it."

The Norwegians said that losses at Govan in 1996 were "not satisfactory". Kvaerner yesterday reported disappointing results for 1996, registering a fall in profits before tax to Nkr750 million (£69.4 million), from Kr2.4 billion, on sales up to Kr58.6 billion, from Kr30.2 billion. Profits for 1996 include a

profit from the sale of ships of Kr344 million and profits of Kr466 million from the sale of other assets. The previous year, however, also had Kr787 million of one-off profits.

Erik Tonseth, Kvaerner's president and chief executive, said: "The 1996 results are most unsatisfactory. Cost reductions and restructuring will continue in 1997, but with continuing pressure on margins and short-term overcapacity in some of our businesses, it is unlikely that profits will improve significantly until the second half of 1997." However, the company president added: "There is room for guarded optimism in several of our markets, as demonstrated by the recent orders in oil and gas and pulp and paper."

Earnings per share fell to Kr19.87, from Kr40.78, although the dividend for the year remains unchanged at Kr6.50.

Kvaerner acquired Trafalgar House, the property, engineering and ships conglomerate in April 1996. The Norwegians had been expected to sell Trafalgar's Cunard cruise ships shortly after the deal was concluded, but appeared to be unable to find a buyer.

Kvaerner yesterday said that it had no plans to sell Cunard, adding that the first priority was to "get the business back into profitability". Cunard was said yesterday to have had a disappointing fourth quarter. Liquidity was described as satisfactory after a Kr6 billion disposal spree during 1996 from both the old Kvaerner and Trafalgar

Haus.

The effect of limiting payments to the first named means many disabled, sick and elderly savers will not benefit from the free shares bonanza because they rely on trustees to operate their accounts.

Consumer organisations and campaigners claim this is discriminatory. In particular, they have criticised the Halifax for its stance. This week, Halifax members voted overwhelmingly in favour of turning the society into a bank.

Raising the issue at question time in the Commons, Liz Lynne (LDRochdale) said that if the Disability Discrimination Act was the flagships of Government policy against the disabled, then it should be used against building societies such as the Halifax.

Mr Burt said: "There is a dispute of opinion as to whether or not the action by the building societies actually contravenes the Act. I believe someone is preparing to test it." He welcomed the Building Societies (Distributions) Bill brought by Douglas French (C Gloucester).



Gus Macdonald, centre, with Gary Hughes, left, and Andrew Flanagan yesterday

Caledonian deal helps Scottish TV to a high

By ERIC REGULY

THE acquisition of Caledonian Publishing and strong programming income helped to lift profits of Scottish Television, the ITV company, to record levels.

The company yesterday reported pre-tax profits before exceptional items of £28 million, up 40 per cent, in the year to December 31, on turnover from continuing operations of £114.7 million, up 16 per cent. Earnings per share were 31p, up from 27.4p.

Caledonian, which was bought last October for £120 million and which published *The Herald* and the *Evening Times* in Glasgow, contributed £1.7 million in operating profits. Analysts expect Caledonian to enhance company earnings significantly in 1997.

A string of new programme commissions, ranging from *McCallum to Snug and Cozy*, boosted Scottish Television's operating profits from production by 43 per cent to £3.3 million, their highest ever. Broadcasting also performed well, with a 24 per cent rise in profits, to £20.6 million.

Pre-tax profits including exceptional items were £61.2 million, against £20.2 million in 1995. The sale of the stakes in ITN and HTV, the ITV company in the west of England and Wales provided the bulk of the gains.

Gus Macdonald, executive chairman, said that trading conditions so far this year were encouraging and that the launch of Channel 5 next month was "no cause for concern" to Scottish Television, where Gary Hughes is finance director and Andrew Flanagan is managing director. The City does not think that the new channel will pose a competitive threat to the ITV companies until 1998.

A final dividend of 13.2p, due on May 29, makes the total dividend 18.7p, up 15 per cent. The shares rose by 7.5p to 637.5p.

Tempus, page 28

Philips seeks \$421m in cable stake sale

PHILIPS ELECTRONICS, the consumer electronics group, plans to raise about \$421 million through the sale of its 50 per cent interest in UPC, the biggest private cable operator in Europe. The interest is being sold to United International Holdings (UIH), the American company that is Philip's partner in the joint venture. UPC holds stakes in cable operators in 14 European countries, representing a total of more than 3 million households and nearly 2.1 million subscribers.

UIH is headquartered in Denver, Colorado, and is one of the main US cable operators active outside the United States. Philips, which is in the process of restructuring its diverse businesses to boost profits, indicated last year that the interest in UPC was no longer considered a core asset and was earmarked for disposal. The consideration includes about \$162 million in new UPC securities, which Philips will sell on after the disposal is completed, which is expected to be in the third quarter of this year. Richard de Lange, president of Philips Media, said: "Philips believes the future of UPC is best served by having investors who are dedicated to this type of industry."

Scottish Widows licence

SCOTTISH WIDOWS has been granted a licence to set up a life assurance company in Jersey that will provide lump sum investment products and regular savings pensions plans aimed at expatriates and high-net-worth mobile international investors. Products will be sold mainly through brokers based in the UK and overseas. The company is being set up under the new Insurance Business (Jersey) Law 1996 and is only the second such licence to be granted by the Jersey authorities. The new company will be called Scottish Widows International Ltd. The product range will be launched in the summer. Mike Ross, group chief executive, said the licence had been secured as part of a "strategic, long-term" plan.

Core valued at £73m

CORE GROUP, the drug developer based in Scotland, will be valued at £73 million when it joins the main exchange on Monday. The company, whose drugs are used in the controlled release of medicines in the body, is raising £23 million from the placing, which it plans to use to fund more of its prototype drugs through clinical trials. It expects to release its first products to the market next year. NM Rothschild has placed 9.2 million of its shares with institutions at 250p apiece.

Share incentives grow

SHARE incentives are spreading among growing businesses. More than half the companies floated on the Stock Exchange last year had share incentive schemes available to all established employees, according to a survey by Paisner & Co, the solicitor. Out of 63 companies first listed in 1996, 39 offer all-employee share schemes. But directors still do far better: 52 companies had Revenue-approved executive share schemes and even more had non-approved schemes for top executives.

Admiral's target

ADMIRAL, the computer services company, is targeting Belgium for its next acquisition after its cash pile grew 18 per cent last year to £6.1 million. The company said that it is looking to bolster Delphy, the Belgian computer consultancy it bought two years ago. A disappointing performance from its software division held back growth in pre-tax profits to 11 per cent, taking the total to £11.2 million. Earnings nudged up by 0.9p to 11.6p per share. A final dividend of 1.54p makes a 2.24p total (£3.8p), due on May 7.

Woolwich savers move

THE formerly neglected small saver is fast becoming the new darling of banks and building societies. The Woolwich yesterday halved the minimum investment on its Premier 30 account from £100 to £50 and lifted the rate for savers with balances of less than £500 from 1 per cent to 2.35 per cent. This is below the 5.75 per cent being offered by the newly launched Sainsbury's Bank on amounts of as little as £1. Tesco's Clubcard Plus pays 3.5 per cent again on deposits of £1 or more. Small savers have been shut out of many societies by higher minimum investment levels imposed to deter speculators.

SCS listing in danger

SCS SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS, which installs and repairs satellite television dishes, is in danger of being ejected from the Alternative Investment Market after Williams de Broe resigned as its nominated adviser. The company said it is in talks with possible replacements and hopes to name one soon. If it fails to do so within two months, it will be removed from the market. Williams de Broe's resignation comes one week after the London Stock Exchange completed its review of nominated advisers, which found fault with 25 City firms.

Limits on society bonuses test law

By CAROLINE MERRELL

THE decision by building societies to restrict bonus payments to the first named person on accounts may be one of the first tests of new laws aimed at ending discrimination against the disabled, Alastair Burt, the Social Security Minister, said today.

The effect of limiting payments to the first named means many disabled, sick and elderly savers will not benefit from the free shares bonanza because they rely on trustees to operate their accounts.

Consumer organisations and campaigners claim this is discriminatory. In particular, they have criticised the Halifax for its stance. This week, Halifax members voted overwhelmingly in favour of turning the society into a bank.

Raising the issue at question time in the Commons, Liz Lynne (LDRochdale) said that if the Disability Discrimination Act was the flagships of Government policy against the disabled, then it should be used against building societies such as the Halifax.

Mr Burt said: "There is a dispute of opinion as to whether or not the action by the building societies actually contravenes the Act. I believe someone is preparing to test it." He welcomed the Building Societies (Distributions) Bill brought by Douglas French (C Gloucester).

Nomura faces trading charge

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

THE Australian Securities Commission (ASC) is taking Nomura International, the Japanese investment bank, to court for allegedly manipulating the Australian stock market.

The case, the first of its kind in Australia, comes after an 11-month inquiry into alleged abnormal trading by Nomura on the Australian stock exchange and the Sydney Futures Exchange on March 29, 1996, when the all-ordinaries index fell 25 points in the final half hour of trading. The ASC alleges that Nomura engaged in market manipulation and "misleading and deceptive conduct" in relation to its unwindings of a large arbitrage position.

The arbitrage, ordered by Nomura's London office and carried out through its Hong Kong office, involved allowing 12,944 share price index futures contracts to expire and ordering the sale of A\$600 million (about £300 million) of securities near the close of trading.

The ASC also alleges that Nomura engaged in "wash trading" — trading with itself — and that its conduct was calculated to create a "false or misleading appearance" with respect to the price of the futures contract.

The ASC is seeking both a declaration by the Federal Court of unlawful conduct and an injunction against Nomura to prevent conduct of this nature happening again.

Nomura rejected the allegations, saying: "Nomura International denies any wrongdoing, can see no legal or factual basis on which the ASC's allegations stand and will be vigorously defending itself. The transaction referred to in the ASC allegations were legitimate stock index arbitrage transactions and took place in March 1996."

Think-tank condemns job fears

By OUR INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Government's claims that signing the European social chapter will put half a million people out of work are dismissed today by Britain's leading independent employment think-tank.

John Major has attacked the social chapter as a "Trojan horse" and said earlier this month that if Labour forms a Government and ends the UK opt-out from the EU's social chapter, 500,000 people will go to work.

However, the Employment Policy Institute today says that such claims are "overblown, inaccurate and unresearched". The institute says that in fact there is no clear evidence that employment protection measures such as the social chapter increase total unemployment.

Regional aid to Britain is secure until the end of the current planned European spending round. But with a range of Eastern European countries likely to join the EU, local authorities in Britain fear that they could draw off large amounts of the European funding currently used by older industrial areas in the UK.

Britain's traditional industrial areas presently receive

EU regional aid should continue

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

EUROPE should sustain regional aid to Britain's still hard-pressed older industrial areas at its present level, local authorities from the traditional steel, coal and textile districts will urge today.

A new campaign group, covering more than 130 local authorities, will today caution against what it sees as a serious threat to EU regional aid in Britain posed by European enlargement.

Regional aid to Britain is secure until the end of the current planned European spending round. But with a range of Eastern European countries likely to join the EU, local authorities in Britain fear that they could draw off large amounts of the European funding currently used by older industrial areas in the UK.

Britain has by far the largest slice of Objective 2 funding from the EU based on its number of assisted areas, but the Alliance for Regional Aid will argue today that the industrial cities of the North, Wales, Scotland and the Midlands may all face cuts in funding.

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Varney: attractive projects

and production and in the Iroquois pipeline, which transports Canadian gas to the northeast United States.

David Varney, chief executive of BG, said: "This transaction demonstrates BG's abilities to develop projects which are attractive to other international partners and to leverage its scarce resources in high-quality partnerships."

Brooklyn Union is a gas distribution company that provides gas services to 1.1 million customers in New York. Its subsidiaries own diversified businesses in gas exploration and

marketing.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, said the investment by Brooklyn Union represented a significant boost for the Province.

The investments in The Phoenix Natural Gas Company and Premier Transco, the pipeline company, are intended to give a boost to the emerging gas market in Northern Ireland.

Phoenix and Premier are leading the development of the natural gas market in Ulster.

Phoenix is building a gas distribution system and natural gas market initially in the Belfast area. About 70km of pipeline has already been constructed. Premier Transco owns and operates the gas pipeline linking Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Brooklyn Union is a gas distribution company that provides gas services to 1.1 million customers in New York. Its subsidiaries own diversified businesses in gas exploration and

Pressure on profits at mutuals

By SARA MCCONNELL

PROFITS at the Coventry and Newcastle building societies fell sharply last year as both societies improved savings and mortgage rates in a bid to highlight the benefits of mutual ownership.

The Coventry saw pre-tax profits nearly halve to £24 million in 1996 over those of the previous year after it introduced benefits costing £20 million. This cut the margin between what it pays savers and what it charges borrowers from 1.83 per cent to 1.25 per cent.

But the society says this "planned narrowing" resulted in a rise of almost 50 per cent in net mortgage advances to £216 million. Net retail savings receipts rose by nearly 44 per cent to £260 million.

At the Newcastle, pre-tax profits fell to £11.5 million in 1996, down from £14.7 million in 1995. The society has introduced a loyalty programme of mortgage discounts for borrowers of five years' standing "to demonstrate the value of mutuality in a tangible way". Net lending rose by 67 per cent to £137 million, while net retail investment rose by 38 per cent to £107 million.

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Capita wins
to run cou

□ Premier heads for trouble in Burma □ High street bank worries about bad debts □ Row over Avis flotation forecast

□ GEOLOGY has played a cruel trick on the oil industry by locating much of the world's remaining reserves in politically unstable countries with human rights records that leave a great deal to be desired. Pulling oil out of the ground would be so much easier if the wells were just outside Bradford rather than Burma, in East Grinstead and not East Timor.

But nature has decreed that the oil companies must stand on the frontline of the battle over investment ethics — a battle that has already claimed a notable victim in the form of Shell. Shell spent two years demonstrating exactly how not to deal with criticism of its operations in Nigeria, ignoring a few little local difficulties until opposition ran out of control.

Burma looks set to become the next cause célèbre for oil company ethical investors. Until recently, the country had been up there with North Korea and pyramid scheme Albania as an inward-looking dictatorship, except without the Stalinist trimmings. There are reports that government forces are clearing villages and committing massacres in the south of the country as they try to suppress the Karen ethnic rebels. That region, echoes of Nigeria's Ogoniland, just happens to be the site of a new gas pipeline from Burma's offshore

fields to Thailand. Premier Oil, a British company, has taken a 30 per cent stake in the pipeline and can expect to find itself a target of campaigners. Premier is fortunate in that it has no retail outlets to be boycotted by protesters, and as the company has only taken an investment role in the project it is unlikely to face the direct anger of the local population — unlike operating partner Texaco. But the least Premier can expect is chaos at the annual meeting. The danger for the companies involved is that they will fall back on the usual platitudes about "differing standards" — a direct quotation from Premier, and one all too reminiscent of the apologies trotted out by some of the world's worst regimes to justify violations of their people's human rights.

Companies have to accept that questions over the ethics of their investment policies are not going to go away. There is a fine line between foreign investment that improves the lot of the local population and investment that merely props up a pariah regime.

This should not rule out invest-

ment in countries with dubious regimes. Companies can act as a force for good, setting high employment standards, contributing to the local economy and gently using their leverage with the government to improve the lot of the local population. But the case cannot be taken for granted.

A willingness to be accountable, perhaps by publishing a clear code of practice showing what an individual company will and will not tolerate of its clients, would improve the standards of debate on both sides. It could also head off serious trouble. Premier, please note.

NatWest rides out the storm

□ AS THE southern half of the country has once again discovered, hatches are best battened down well in advance of the storm — it is too late once the chimney pots are already flying. To extend the meteorological metaphor further, for Derek Wanless, chief executive at NatWest Group, every silver

PENNINGTON



lining, in the form of a strong economy, has a cloud.

Last year's figures from NatWest, as we firesomely must remember to call it, tell us little about the actual state of the business. There were losses and gains on disposals, and the previous year's numbers were restated. So much of yesterday's fall in the share price may merely have reflected the analysts' confusion.

But if NatWest says it can detect an approaching storm, as measured by a slowdown in economic growth next year, and so more business failures and private loans going sour, then the first few gusts were audible yesterday. Bad debts may have fallen by 4 per cent, but if you

strip out £100 million written off on Eurotunnel in 1995 the actual rise was closer to 17 per cent, as against a loan portfolio that rose by 10 per cent.

Of course, anyone who has been around since the 1987 hurricane knows this is how the bank lending cycle works. The suspicion must be that NatWest is keen to emphasise caution to the stock market because of questions over the rest of its strategy. There was certainly concern about higher spending on computers, £200 million ahead of forecasts over the next couple of years at a time when all banks are under pressure to cut UK banking costs.

There were doubts about the money being spent building up NatWest Markets, despite a good performance last year. And there was the inevitable foolish grumbling over the lack of a share buy-back. Against these negatives, the decision not to become embroiled in the battle for Scottish Amicable looks a wise one.

NatWest has made its strategy clear — whether you believe it is the correct one depends on your view of the future of UK domestic and investment banking. But the bank is clearly determined to keep its competitive edge.

State of independence

□ ONE of the little fictions on the stock market that we are not supposed to discuss is the value of research that comes out of the so-called house broker. It is tacitly accepted that a company that pays broker's fees is entitled not to be kicked too hard by the resident analyst. There are however exceptions; there are also cases such as RJB Mining, where the house broker was the last to close for comfort at last year's débâcle at Wickes.

This is not to say that Avis's accounting policies are anything but conservative, or that profits, excepting a rather unfortunate patch in 1994, have not shown good growth over the past 15 years. However, Avis does not help its case by refusing, for reasons of commercial confidentiality, it says, to talk about the terms on offer from the carmakers.

Profit from residuals could become an issue later — they certainly have for at least one of its rivals in that market. In which case, UBS can rightly say that it raised the matter first.

Strong pound hits EMI success with Spice Girls

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

WORLDWIDE success for the Spice Girls could not prevent EMI, the music company, from suffering a dip in third-quarter earnings as the soaring pound knocked £16 million off profits.

The all-girl group, who won two prizes at this week's Brit awards, were EMI's top act — selling seven million copies of their debut album and five million singles worldwide.

Profits, excluding tax and exceptional items, for the nine months ended December 31, fell 6 per cent to £293 million. At constant exchange rates, profits declined 1 per cent to £30 million.

But shares in the company recovered slightly after recent losses — climbing 4½ p to close at £117½ — after the com-

pany commented that the fourth quarter had started strongly.

Sir Colin Southgate, chairman, said that the company's release schedule was heavily weighted towards the final quarter, including new albums from Blur and Mansun, which have both made number one in the UK charts, and Eternel.

The company added that it expected to report full-year profits in the region of £380 million to £400 million and predicted it would suffer a £25 million currency hit.

Overall turnover fell 4.6 per cent to £2.57 billion. Operating profits in the music division fell 8 per cent to £285 million. The company was particularly badly hit by the on-going

music store war in the US and sales remained weak in continental Europe.

But EMI said that overall music growth remained robust with a strong performance in emerging markets, and that it remained confident in the health of the music market in the coming years.

The third and final Beatles anthology sold 2.5 million units, taking total sales of the three-part anthology to 13 million copies. Other acts that sold more than a million units included The Artist Formerly Known As Prince and Deana Carter, the country singer.

Sales at HMV, the music retailer, increased 14 per cent to £671 million, representing like-for-like growth of 5.2 per cent. But operating profits

increased just 2 per cent to £22 million, because of start-up costs at HMV Direct and HMV Germany. Dilutions, the bookstore, increased sales 8 per cent. Profits from minority stakes fell 27 per cent to £8.5 million, because of the impact of a weak yen on the contribution from Toshiba EMI.

EMI music publishing delivered strong results in North America, the UK, Brazil and Japan, with contributions from artists such as Tracy Chapman, Simply Red, Crowded House and Take That.

Finance charges fell 34 per cent to £12.6 million, because of lower average net borrowings and disposals. The underlying tax rate declined slightly to 37.5 per cent.

Shire pays £55m for US drug developer

BY PAUL DURMAN

SHIRE Pharmaceuticals looks set to lift its stock market value to almost £200 million by buying a US drug development company for an initial payment of up to £55.5 million.

Shire valued at £106.6 million when it floated a year ago, is buying Pharmavene, which pulled out of a Nasdaq listing last year after the market turned against US biotechnology stocks. Shire may have to pay a further £49 million to Pharmavene's vendors over the next few years, depending on the success of various development projects.

Pharmavene specialises in drug delivery, developing improved versions of existing drugs. It is working on a treatment for viral infections that will be more easily absorbed.

Shire said that Pharmavene's approach was similar to its own, avoiding development risk and concentrating on commercialisation. The acquisition will give Shire a product pipeline of 30 projects.

Shire is helping to fund the deal by raising £115 million with a one-for-ten placing and open offer of new shares at 21½p. The existing shares slipped 3½p to 23½p, yesterday.

Shire will pay the vendors up to £15.2 million in cash. The remaining £40.2 million of initial consideration will be in shares.

Shire yesterday reported a £100,000 loss for the half year to December 31, on sales down from £12.1 million to 19.9 million. The slide from a £4.6 million profit last year was because of the absence of a payment received in connection with a treatment for Alzheimer's disease.

Sema profits grow 35%

SEMA, the Anglo-French computer services group which last month bought the former British Rail ticket operating system for £27 million, picked up the business cheaply, according to analysts (Fraser Nelson writes).

One analyst said: "Sema is sitting on a goldmine. It picked up the business for £27

million when it has turnover of £87 million — and margins pretty much the same as the group's average, that is a very good deal." Sema's other acquisitions helped the company to lift pre-tax profits to £50 million, a rise of 35 per cent over the year.

Temps page 28

Capita wins £32m contracts to run council computers

BY FRASER NELSON

CAPITA, the business support services group, has swept up the three remaining local government contracts that were up for renewal in 1997, adding a further £32 million to its order book.

The company, Britain's largest independent council tax collector, has secured extensions to its contracts to run the county council computer systems for Kent and Wiltshire. It has also won an eight-year extension to collect and process taxes payable to Mendip District Council.

The extensions were announced as the company returned record results for 1996.

Rod Aldridge, chief executive, said that RAS's "fast track" entry process was winning orders from private businesses looking for new staff. More than 20 per cent of successful RAS candidates are being placed in businesses outside the Civil Service.

While public sector contracts fell to two thirds of sales, Mr Aldridge said the company, which administers nursery school vouchers and the theory part of driving tests, was not retreating from the sector.

Bureaucracy is hitting central government more than local government, he said.

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CAPITA
Rod Aldridge, left, with Paul Pindar, managing director, achieved record results

News Corp to use BT for ASkyB

BY ERIC REGULY

TERRY LEAHY, the new chief executive of Tesco, insisted yesterday that the supermarket group would not have to pay any compensation or penalty to NatWest after Tesco's early termination of NatWest's contract to run the Clubcard Plus debit card account.

The Royal Bank of Scotland is to take over the running of the accounts. An enhanced Clubcard Plus will be relaunched in May or June and will be followed by a credit card and then other financial services.

Mr Leahy said that Tesco and NatWest are discussing the handing over of Clubcard Plus, and the settling of outstanding payments for services provided by the bank.

Elliott gains support on Salvesen

BY PAUL DURMAN

SIR Gerald Elliott, the former chairman of Christian Salvesen, yesterday claimed he already had the support of 14 per cent of shareholders in his bid to block the distribution company's demerger.

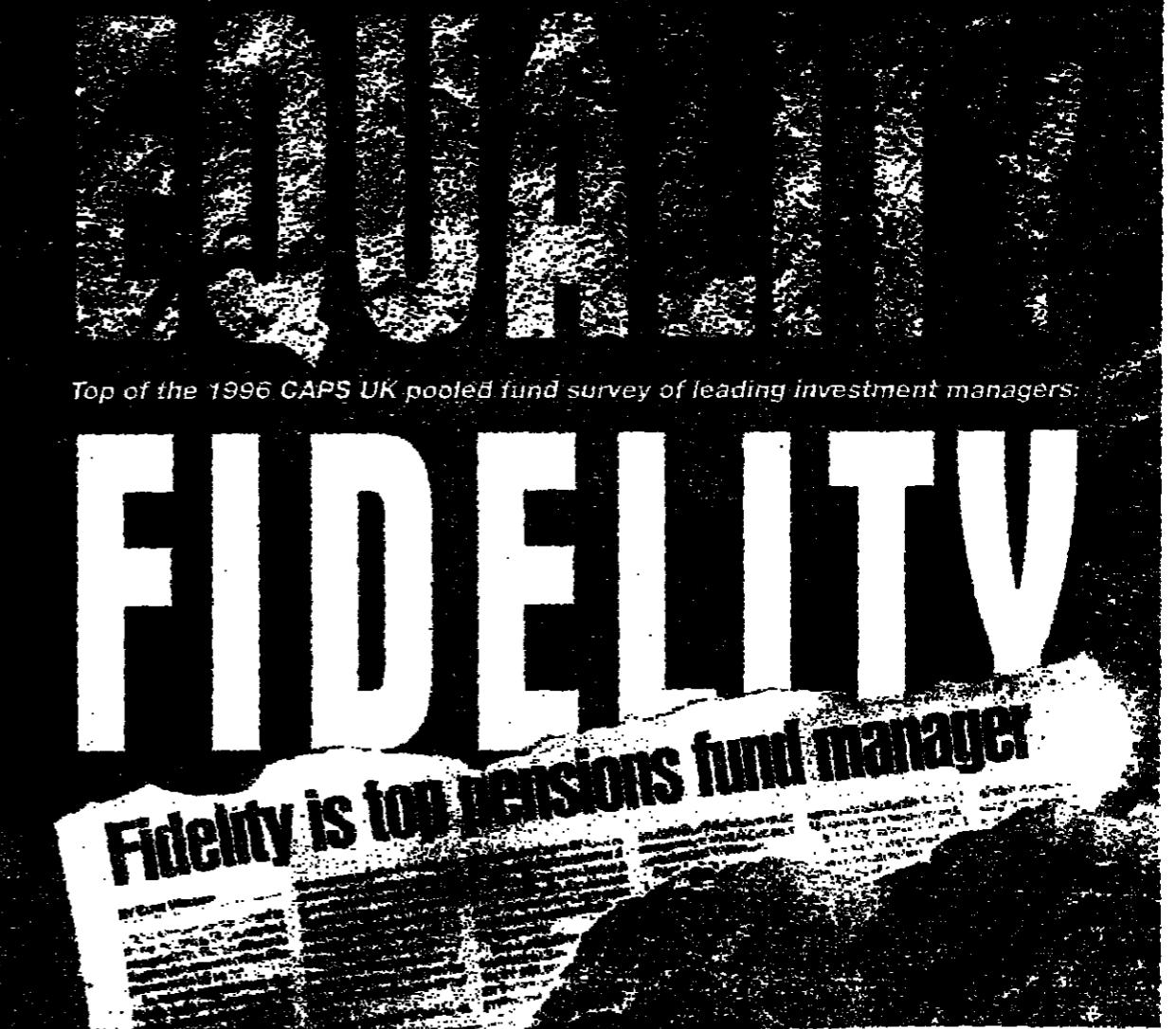
In a letter to shareholders, Sir Gerald urged Salvesen's owners to vote against the company's plans to pay a special dividend of £100 million and to demerge Aggreko, the fast-growing power rental business. He said the proposals to break up Salvesen were "ill-judged and defeatist".

Sir Gerald, great grandson of Salvesen's founder, accused the company's management of mishandling last year's takeover approach from Hays.

He proposes to install John Grant, former finance director of LucasVarity, the car components group, as chief executive, to carry out a strategic review.



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STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK

Wall Street record fails to ease investors' worries

THERE was a brief celebration for Wall Street's overnight record-breaking run but, with several hurdles to cross today, few investors yesterday were ready to commit fresh funds to the market.

There will be a collective sigh of relief if today's gilt auction involving £2.5 billion of longer-dated stock is comfortably subscribed. In addition, there will be further apprehension later in the day as Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, gives his testimony on the US economy to Congress. The City will be wanting to see the reaction of US Treasury bonds before planning its next move.

This, combined with political worries ahead of tomorrow's Wirral South by-election, kept investors sidelined although the squaring-up of book positions and a stream of major trading statements boosted turnover to \$21.6 million shares.

With the Dow Jones industrial average failing to consolidate its early gains, the FT-SE 100 index finished well down on the day. After touching 4,357.9, it closed 13.6 up at 4,344.7.

Among leaders, BAT industries advanced 13.1p to 546.1p, reflecting recent demand on the other side of the Atlantic for Philip Morris.

Yorkshire Electricity rose 10p to 891.1p. That compares with the 92.7p a share being offered by Yorkshire Holdings, owned jointly by American Electric Power of Ohio and Public Services of Colorado, US power generators.

National Westminster Bank tumbled 36p to 776.2p after full-year figures came in at the lower end of City expectations. Unlike the other banks that have already reported, NatWest reported a drop in pre-tax profits after charges of £905 million relating to the disposal of Bancorp in the US and the cost of restructuring. Lord Alexander, chairman, was also quick to rule out the possibility of NatWest making a counter-bid for Scottish Amicable, which already has bids on the table from Abbey National, down 10p to 709.1p, and Prudential Corporation, 31.1p firmer at 563p.

The rest of the bank sector spent a nervous day awaiting today's full-year numbers from Standard Chartered, down 12p to 770p. Brokers are forecasting pre-tax profits



Richard Saville, left, Joseph Dwyer, centre, and Dennis Brant, deputy chief executive, of George Wimpey, which slipped 11.2p

ranging from £855 million to £874 million compared with £661 million last time. The City will want to know what impact the death of Deng Xiaoping will have on future trading. Standard is one of the few banks licensed to trade in the Chinese currency.

Elsewhere in the sector, Royal Bank of Scotland shed 9p to 613.1p, and Bank of

United News & Media, 51.2p better at 709.1p.

Thorn fell 13.2p to 189.7p as the City began to have second thoughts about Monday's third-quarter setback for profits. But there was grudging approval to the other half of the recent merger with EMI firming 4.1p to 611.971p.

George Wimpey, Britain's biggest housebuilder, slipped 11.2p to 140p after more than doubling its profits last year. The group, under Joseph Dwyer, chairman and chief executive, and Richard Saville, finance director, even went so far as to allay shareholders' fears about mounting debts and outline moves to build up the landbank.

A profits warning left Neaseend Sp down on the day at 33.1p. The engineer said results for the year would fall short of market expectations, with profits failing to match last year's.

Profit warnings also left Sep Industries 10.1p lower at 26p and Alastair 53.2p at 38p.

Union, one of the few remaining discount houses, rose 81.1p to 95p after reporting several bid approaches.

News of a bid approach boosted Mackie International Group 20p to 180p. But it warned the speculators that any offer for the company may not exceed 160p.

Drew Scientific touched 33.1p in early trade on talk of a possible bid approach. Profits, profit warnings also left Sep Industries 10.1p lower at 26p and Alastair 53.2p at 38p.

Marks & Spencer continued to make the most of a "buy" recommendation from the retail team at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the broker, with a rise of 14.1p to 503p. Kleinwort also likes Next, 16p better at 609.1p, and says there is scope for a 10 per cent

improvement in the retail sector generally. That comment lifted Great Universal Stores 5p to 681p. DFS 10p to 590.1p, Dixons 11p to 528.1p, MFI 8p to 192p, and Flying Flowers 1p to 252.1p.

Empat, the troubled publisher, was again beating a retreat with a fall of 12.1p to 77p after the loss of David Arcules. He is joining the board of

Scotsman 3p at 358.1p, while there were gains for Barclays, 26p higher at 612.2p, HSBC, up 15.1p to 615.79, and Lloyds TSB, 8p better at 510p.

A badly handled buying order squeezed WPP Group 15p higher at 268.1p. Two parcels of 500,000 shares went through at 252p and 253p. Another line of 500,000 shares went through at 263p. Last

Emap was boosted in the future pits as investors rolled over open positions in the March future into June as the long gilt closed three ticks firmer at 513.32. A total of 107,000 contracts were completed.

Treasury 8 per cent 2015 put a rise of 7.1p to end the day at 1016.17, while Treasury 8 per cent 2000 hardened a tick to 1045.32.

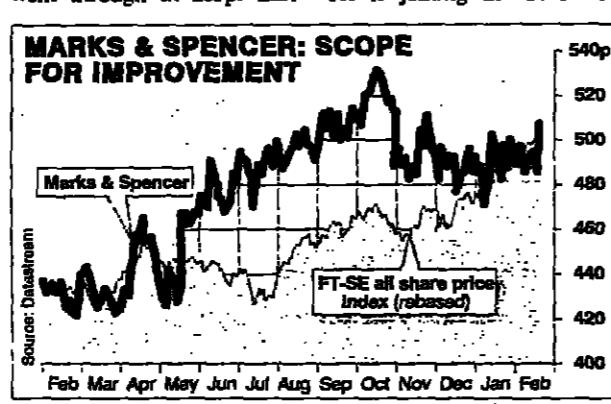
■ NEW YORK: Profit-takers moved in after Monday's rally to send shares lower and by midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 19.63 points at 6,988.57.

The soaring pound will continue to hurt profits in the

first half of next year, but the company will continue to show underlying growth. Bid speculation has abated in recent weeks, but EMI, which is the only pure music stock, is always likely to remain the number one target in the sector. The company currently sits on a price/earnings ratio for 1998 of around 20 times. Not cheap, but the company should be more than a one-hit wonder.

The more immediate threat is an unstable shareholder base. Flextech, the cable and satellite TV programmer, and Mirror Group, each own 20 per cent. Flextech faces a £150 million bill to develop BBC-branded subscription channels and probably will sell the Scottish TV stake to help finance the launch. Whether Mirror Group would follow suit is anyone's guess.

Scottish TV shareholders would, of course, be helped by a takeover battle like the one in the West Country last year. This seems unlikely, unless both Flextech and Mirror Group agree to auction their stakes together.



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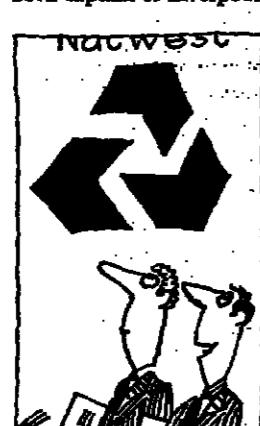
THE
TIMESCITY
DIARYBreakfast
iffiness

MINISTERS are splashing out on business breakfasts. In answer to a parliamentary question yesterday, Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, said that ministers have spent £78,000 on power breakfasts.

The Prime Minister is looking forward to a letter from Barbara Roche, the Shadow Small Business Minister, asking him to justify spending taxpayers' money for ministers to breakfast in marginal seats. "Small firms are the target of these visits," she said. "The ones I meet want rather more from this Government in the run up to the general election than coffee and croissants and ministers who are here."

Wrong-footed

IN Singapore for the opening of the latest branch of Harry Ramsden's fish and chip shop, John Barnes, the chairman, was mightily impressed with the VIP treatment. Ushered into his hotel, Barnes was whisked up to the penthouse suite where chocolates and flowers were in abundance. Then he spotted a letter from the hotel football team asking if he would pose alongside them for a celebrity photograph. "I turned up in the foyer at the agreed time and their faces fell," he says, adding that he looks more like an ageing Ryan Giggs than the Jamaican captain of Liverpool.



"I think it means proceed with caution."

Eton connection

SIR Denis Mahon goes on public display today. The great-nephew of one of the original founders of the merchant bank Guinness Mahon, whose collection of Italian Baroque paintings is currently on loan to the Sainsbury wing of the National Gallery, offers us a brief insight into the art collector's personal life. The ten sketches by Luca Giordano that hang in the exhibition were bought from Lord Shrewsbury to help him to purchase his carriage for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. Sir Denis' good relations with Lord Shrewsbury predate this gesture — Lord Shrewsbury was Sir Denis' godfather at Eton.

JOHN GIBSON, the Glasgow-based regional manager of the Stock Exchange, mysteriously took leave of his job last Friday. Sally Everett, formerly regional co-ordinator at the SE, replaces him from next week. The SE refuses to comment on the departure of her predecessor, referring to it as a "personal matter".

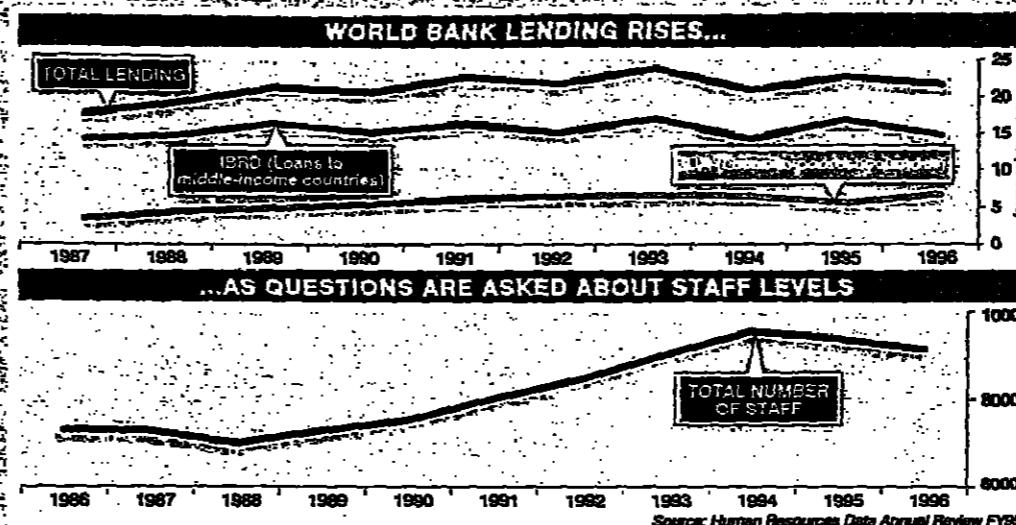
Dodgy presence

PROTESTS at the success of the Spice Girls at this week's Brit Awards reached the motor industry when Dodgy, the popular singing combo, apparently boycotted the event in favour of the What Car? Awards. The group is said to have taken a table for the venue in the Great Room at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London's Mayfair, but dinner guests — seemingly a generation more likely to recognise the Monkees — were apparently unaware of one of the nation's up-and-coming supergroups.

MORAG PRESTON

Banking on revolution to banish climate of decay

The World Bank is hoping to improve its poor image with yet more radical internal surgery. Bronwen Maddox reports



These charges, but says: "We were a little bit smarter and a little bit less wrong than others in development." David Dollar, a senior researcher, adds that "the influence of the World Bank on countries' policies is greatly exaggerated. Our big sins in Africa were providing financial assistance to countries with bad policies — but the Bank didn't cause the bad policies."

However, criticisms of the Bank's record have grown steadily. Last year just 70 per cent of completed projects were judged successful, an improvement on five years ago but a decline from the early level of 80 per cent. Despite repeated assaults on its tiers of bureaucracy, staff numbers have also risen to more than 9,000.

But the Bank's most painful disappointment is the failure of many of its plans for sub-Saharan Africa. Professor Stiglitz observes that in the 1960s and 1970s, the Bank let African governments assume a central role in spending development funds which, given their lack of experience, was unrealistic. More recently, the Bank has also attacked for taking too little regard of the local consequences of its projects, and for neglecting environmental concerns until the Green Movement gained political clout in the 1980s. Mark Malloch Brown, Bank spokesman, acknowledges

the Bank's IDA programme to the poorest countries, the remaining one third, needs annual injections.

The challenges facing the Bank are encapsulated in the strained relationship with the US. Its contributions to IDA, nominally one fifth of the total, have been stalled by Congress, which is sceptical of the Bank's effectiveness and infuriated by its rising costs. Mr Wolfensohn says he is confident that President Clinton's commitment to make good the US's promises to IDA will survive Congress. But others in the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, a congressional body with influence on the outcome, say they wait for evidence of real reform.

Mr Wolfensohn, 63, a forceful, charming, Australian-born financier, and now a naturalised American, was well aware of those challenges when he took the helm. He overestimated the rate at which the Bank's 9,000 staff, 90 per cent based in Washington, would be prepared to change. In March 1996, he complained despairingly of a "glass wall" blocking his efforts: "How can we change the atmosphere? How can we move from cynicism, distrust and distance to risk-taking an involvement?"

According to Mr Wolfensohn, frustration has been replaced with confidence. "Most of the real change has come in the last six months — I now have the support of management and staff." When asked why his reforms will succeed where others failed, he says: "I was not in charge of the others." He adds that his plan "is the way you would run the Bank if it was your own business".

The core of his scheme is decentralisation, designed to make the Bank more accountable to borrowing countries. He also wants to move the Bank away from its traditional focus on infrastructure towards the business of giving advice to governments. His plan aims to trim expenses and reinvest the savings in the "frontline" — improving education and health, and promoting banking and legal reform to encourage private capital. It will push up costs initially but is designed to make a sharp dent by 2000.

Despite Mr Wolfensohn's claims of support, the plan, which goes to the Bank's board on March 13, remains controversial. It will mean peeling some bureaucrats away from their comfortable Washington lives and sending them into the field. Even Bank staff not directly affected also argue that he may be shedding valuable experience — at a cost of \$350,000 in redundancy payments for each job.

It is also clear that the plan leaves questions unanswered. The Bank is still vulnerable to the charge that its lending is buffered by fashion; privatisation appears a good candidate for the latest enthusiasm. Bank regional specialists deny that they are "privatisation ideologues", and Robert Hindle, a former member of the Bank's East Africa privatisation team, says readily that transferring ownership of industry to the private sector fails to help the economy where a government is not prepared to encourage competition, as in Kenya. But the Bank's current support for privatisation leaves it open to future criticism.

Nor, if the Wolfensohn plans take effect, will the Bank find it easier to demonstrate success to its financial backers. It can always point to a hydroelectric dam but claims of having averted a banking crisis will be harder to establish. As it leaves more of the safer, lucrative projects to private banks, its return on its investment will also inevitably fall.

Yet it is clear that the plan offers the Bank an important chance to demonstrate that it can cut costs, and that it does not adopt a "one size fits all" approach to development. It will not remove donor countries' new scepticism: it may not even protect the current level of donations. But it should help to answer the charge that an institution that prescribes economic recipes for the rest of the world cannot put its own house in order.

Chips with everything offer sweet sensation to German investors

Oliver August watches the test run at Siemens's new Tyneside factory

Locally, it is known as "the billion pound chip factory". To the rest of British industry, it is the biggest completed inward investment project in Britain. Siemens, the German electronics group, has built Europe's most modern semiconductor factory on Tyneside.

The first test run has now begun and chips will soon be exported around the globe. "This marks the start of production at the £1 billion plant," the company said yesterday.

Only ten years ago such an event would have been unthinkable. The Tyneside site is a living monument to the scale of change that British industry has undergone. The Siemens factory overlooks the ailing Swan Hunter shipyard, formerly one of the biggest employers in the region. Today, Siemens styles itself as the "number one employer in the neighbourhood". A total of 1,100 people will eventually work in the factory — 550 have already been hired.

The new jobs and the prospect of becoming the silicon valley of Europe have rejuvenated the area.

The decision to base the plant on Tyneside was taken in August 1995. The cornerstones were laid a few months later, equipment was in place last November and mass production will start this summer — only two years after the project was begun.

Helmut Brunner, the German executive director, said: "We are on schedule and we met all our targets." He is one of the 50 German managers who supervised the swift construction of the plant. By the end of this year, however, control over the 100-acre site will pass into local hands.

The type of microchip produced is called a wafer. It looks like a slice of salami, but is in reality a micro-thin slice of silicon, which is made in 370 separate stages. This week the entire process was for the first time operated simultaneously, and the first salami slices are now ready to be served.

Initially the weekly output will be limited to 1,700 wafers, to be increased to 6,000 at a later date when the production run has been fine-tuned. The so-called "raw process" — the minimum time it takes to make a wafer from start to finish — is 17 days. This is, however, more efficient to stretch the process to 35 to 40 days.

Herr Brunner claimed that production times would be one of the fastest in the industry. Speed seems to be his main focus, rather than the stereotypically German qualities of efficiency and order.

The local population has certainly been impressed with the speed with which the plant



Jürgen Gehrels was enticed by Britain's low wage levels

was put up. A cabbie dropping visitors off at the factory gate said: "It's faster than Germany because they've got Newcastle Brown Ale to keep them going."

The factory is steel construction which contains a single source of concrete. At its heart is a 4,000 sq ft "clean room". Here the wafers are put together in a totally dust-free environment.

The space suits worn by staff may soon be discarded. A new system called SMIF (Standard Mechanical Interface) will allow employees to work in shell suits instead.

SMIF involves glass briefcases in which wafers can be transported dust-free from one machine to the next. All machines are enclosed in their

plant is a main plank of Siemens's strategy for the UK. The group is now a leading UK electronics company with a turnover of £1.5 billion last year. Plans already exist to develop another plant next to the newly operational one.

What is holding back Siemens so far is the dismal state of the global semiconductor market. It has annual sales worldwide of \$200 billion. Siemens, headed by Jürgen Gehrels and which employs 19,000 people around the globe, currently sells \$3 billion of semiconductors a year, but hopes to treble this in the next three years.

Considerable fluctuations, however, present players in the world chip market with quite a challenge. Prices for some of Siemens's chips recently fell from DM20 to DM4. But Heinrich Hammann, a senior director, is confident that this will be corrected. He said: "Demand from suppliers is balancing out now. Volume is coming back. We hope that the price erosion will be stopped as well."

But why did Siemens decide to set up a venture that is so dependent on highly skilled staff in the North East? Simple, said Herr Hammann. Wages are low compared with Germany and people are so desperate for work that they are happy to receive the extensive training that they need to work in a semiconductor plant. Graduates start on £15,000 and engineers in non-managerial positions can earn up to £45,000. Salaries include a 40 per cent shift premium. While the UK plant was being built over the past year, the new employees were sent to Siemens sites in Germany and Austria to learn and familiarise themselves with new techniques.

Leif Aviss, the personnel director, has something of a Germanic disciplinarian streak, despite appearing to be an unassuming Englishman. Workers will not be allowed to wear make-up, smoke or work flexi-time. They have to work 12-hour shifts on four out of eight days. He said: "We want to discipline our people. Cleanliness is so important."

Mr Aviss added: "We work to help overcome the problem that the North East has the highest unemployment levels in England." He doesn't mention that the British Government is shelling out sweeteners worth about £200 million to make such work a lucrative pursuit for the company. An advertising hoarding at Hadrian Business Park, where the factory is situated, shouts "goldmine for sale". With a little luck, Siemens goldmine will benefit everyone involved.

Restoration of Binns stores would need like minds

From Mr F. T. Pattinson

Sir, I can sympathise with what Mr B. J. H. Matthiessen has to say (Business letters, page II) about the pre-war Binns stores.

I started an apprenticeship with Binns on September 1, 1939 having given up a legal career [with a practice in Darlington] so to do.

In April 1942 I joined the RAFVR, which interrupted, until 1946, my apprenticeship with Binns. After a short stay

with Binns I went to college in London.

During my short post-war stay with Binns rumours were abounding that the House of Fraser wanted to take over the Binns Group.

Such a takeover would give the House of Fraser its largest stake in England.

The House of Fraser, under the chairmanship of Hugh Fraser, later to become Lord Fraser, eventually, after a long and bitter struggle, took over

the Binns Group. Binns soon began to alter after the House of Fraser had bought it.

If Mr Matthiessen has ideas of restoring what is left of the original Binns Group to its past eminence I would suggest that he should make overtures to the John Lewis Partnership, or another like-minded business!

Yours faithfully,
F. T. PATTINSON,
532 Barandon Walk,
London, W1.

Cascade cause and effect of taxation

From Mr M. R. Sharman

Sir, One of the long-term aims of this Government is to said to be the abolition of inheritance tax (IHT) and capital gains tax (CGT), in order to allow wealth to "cascade down the generations".

Abolition of IHT would obviously increase the amount of wealth which would reach the next generation, but the

question is when? In the absence of IHT, there would be no tax incentive to make lifetime gifts, and many potential donors might prefer to retain their assets until death.

At present, one of the most powerful incentives to make timely lifetime gifts is the seven-year IHT risk.

Often the biggest obstacle to lifetime gifts is CGT. Total abolition of CGT is probably not the answer, as this would be likely to revive the tax avoidance industry's in-

terest in schemes for converting taxable income into tax-free gains.

Retention of the present IHT rules, combined with abolition or deferral of CGT on gifts, would be more likely to encourage early lifetime gifts, and thus promote the cascade effect.

Yours faithfully,
M. R. SHARMAN
Biddle & Co.,
1 Gresham Street,
EC2.

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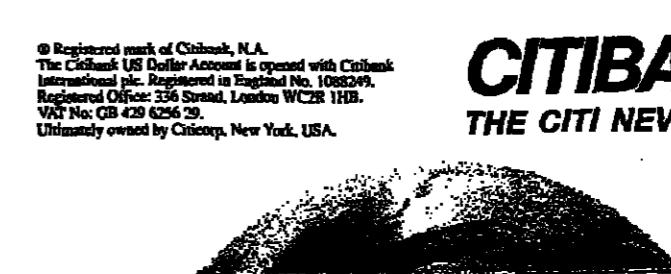
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Trocadero pair may float their Enid Blyton business

By JASON NISSE

NIGEL WRAY and Nick Lesau, the entrepreneurs behind Burford and Trocadero, are considering floating the Enid Blyton company, owner of the rights to the late author's books for children, with a market value of more than £50 million.

This compares with the £14.7 million that Trocadero paid for the business last year. Trocadero has since renegotiated publishing rights to the books with Reed, taking back merchandising of Noddy from the BBC, and it is near to securing a deal to make a version of Noddy for US television.

The business made profits of £650,000 last year, and Trocadero believes that this can be more than tripled within a couple of years.

If the business floats, it will be the fourth public company in which Mr Wray and Mr Lesau are involved. There will be a fifth if they float Nottingham Forest, the football club in which they are investors. Trocadero, quoted on the AIM, is to join the main market at the end of this year, and the group is looking for a chief executive to replace Mr Lesau, and a finance director, to take over from Julian Gleek, who is also at Burford.

Trocadero's first results as a separate company were disappointing, with pre-tax profits down a third to £1.23 million and earnings per share down from 5.5p to 1.6p.

Mr Lesau admitted that the main problem was with Segeworld, the interactive theme park run by Sega at the Trocadero, the London leisure complex, which had a poor launch. If Sega does not achieve £6 million of annual turnover by September 1999, Trocadero has a right to evict the Japanese giant. It is thought that only 1.1 million people will visit Segeworld this year, against previous targets as high as two million. Spending per person is £8.50, against projections of £15.

Trocadero is bringing in new tenants, including The Giant Drop – a 125ft free-fall ride – and a 3-D max screen.



Nick Lesau, left, and Nigel Wray may float their Enid Blyton business and aim to help Noddy on to television in the US

GRE's £1bn war chest raises fears of a costly bid battle

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

SHARES in Guardian Royal Exchange, the insurance group, slipped 4p to 263p yesterday after John Robins, group chief executive, announced a £1 billion war chest to fund acquisitions at home and abroad.

This raised fears that it could get embroiled in an expensive bidding contest with the likes of GE Capital and the Prudential if AXA Law & General goes up for sale.

Mr Robins surprised the market with a final dividend of 6.6p, due on 1 July, bringing the total for the year to 10p, up

1.1 per cent. He also said that GRE's net asset value, including life-embedded value, was £2.5 billion, giving an NAV per share of 281p, higher than expected.

In addition, he revealed for the first time that the shareholder stake in the life business was worth £302 million, equal to 33p per share in asset terms. However, Mr Robins blamed restructuring costs and a dramatic rise in weather-related claims for a 15 per cent fall in trading profits.

Trading profits had fallen from £340 million in 1995 to

£281 million last year, he said, although the group had kept premium income from worldwide general insurance broadly level at £2.9 billion.

Mr Robins said the decline in profits included £39 million cost of merging RAC Insurance Services and the commercial insurance business of Legal & General, which it acquired last year. Guardian insurance is shedding 350 jobs and closing 12 offices. Weather-related and subsidence claims pushed underwriting losses in the UK up £12 million, to £32 million.

However, Mr Robins expected Guardian Direct, the telephone-based insurance arm launched in 1994, to break even this year. In-force policies doubled to 275,000 and Guardian had undertaken a further 233,000 policies since acquiring RACIS. The company had expanded into Northern Ireland last year and would open in South Africa next month, he added.

Guardian Health increased premium income 69 per cent and now has a 4 per cent share among specialist intermediaries. The group's life business

made a profit of £31 million, on top of a 22 per cent rise in new business from corporate pensions and protection.

Exceptionally severe weather also doubled losses in North America to £26 million, although the group has completed capital restructuring of the GRE Insurance Group and built a new motor insurance centre in Indianapolis.

The group raised £40 million through the sales of Guardian Re, its Swiss reinsurance company, its Trade Indemnity stake and Aquis property development portfolio.

Mersey Docks dispute costs group £800,000

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE prolonged Liverpool docks dispute cost the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company £800,000 in operating profit last year, it was revealed yesterday.

The dispute, which began in September 1995, involves 329 dockers dismissed for refusing to cross a picket line. The group repeated yesterday that its offer of £28,000 per man, on condition that each one of them be given the chance to respond via a secret ballot, is final. The offer has not been accepted.

In the year to December 30 pre-tax

profits were down 6.3 per cent to £29.7 million. Operating profit rose from £37.6 million to £43.8 million, but the trading losses and closure costs of the cross-Channel Eurolink totalled £9.1 million. The service was closed on December 1.

Earnings per share were 22.77p (24.49p). The proposed final dividend of 8.75p (7.85p), payable on May 8, gives a full-year dividend of 12.75p (11.5p).

The group plans to spend £48 million on new facilities at Liverpool and Medway during 1997.

US economy confidence

CONSUMERS in America remain sanguine about the prospects for the US economy and business opportunities, the Conference Board reported yesterday.

While the board's confidence index dipped slightly in February, falling to 118.4 from 118.7 in January, the New York research group said its latest survey showed that consumers were "clearly upbeat" about current business activity.

The survey is based on a representative sample of 5,000 households.

Heron to build chain of European leisure parks

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

HERON, the unlisted property company run by Gerald Ronson, is expanding into the European leisure market with a £135 million development of five sites in Spain and France.

The group recently announced that it was investing £300 million on property in the UK and Spain and on a land development scheme in Wales. It now intends to develop leisure and retail parks in Madrid, on two sites in Paris and a further two in the north of France. The Madrid project will be located close to the city's main ring road and cover 250,000 sq ft. It will

include a multiplex cinema and a factory outlet, and should create about 1,000 jobs. Heron said: "The French developments will each be about 200,000 sq ft. Heron said it is in advanced discussion with leading leisure groups and cinema operators about prospective tenancies."

Gerald Ronson, the chief executive of Heron, said: "We intend to build up the Heron International leisure division as a series of branded parks across Europe." Further projects in France, Spain and other European countries are planned.

Court of Appeal

Returned writ was properly served

Nottingham Building Society v Peter Bennett & Co (a Firm)

Before Lord Justice Waite and Mr Justice Singer
Judgment February 14

One of the intended recipients of a writ, having knowledge of its nature, had been given a sufficient opportunity of possession of the writ to enable him to exercise dominion over it for any period of time, however brief the writ had been left with him for the purpose of effecting good personal service. Under Order 65, rule 2 of the Rules of the Supreme Court.

Thus, where a process server put a writ into the hands of a former partner of a solicitors' firm in dissolution and the partner knew that it was a writ and read the description of the parties, good service had been effected upon him, even though the partner stated that he was not accepting service and handed it back to the process server who took it away with him to obtain further instructions.

The Court of Appeal so held, allowing an appeal by the plaintiffs, Nottingham Building Society, against the defendants, Peter Bennett & Co, against the order of Sir

Peter Webster sitting as a judge of the Queen's Bench Division on January 18, 1996.

The judge had dismissed the plaintiff's appeal from District Judge Oliver's order of December 1995, deciding that the writ had not been duly served on the defendants in accordance with Order 65, rule 2 of the Rules of the Supreme Court and Order 61, rule 3(3) and that the defect in service had not been cured or waived under Order 2, rule 1.

Order 65, rule 2 provides: "Personal service of a document is effected by leaving a copy of the document with the person to be served."

Rule 81, rule 3 provides: "(3) Where a partnership has, to the knowledge of the plaintiff, been dissolved before an action against the firm is begun, the writ... must be served on every person within the jurisdiction sought to be made liable in the action."

Mrs Linden Ile for the plaintiffs; Mr Julian Pleton for the defendants.

LORD JUSTICE WAITE said that the plaintiffs claimed damages for professional negligence against the defendants, a solicitors' partnership which had been dis-

solved after arrival of the cause of action. The defence of a respondeat non est was undertaken by the solicitors' indemnity fund who had agreed that the plaintiffs need serve only one of the defendants' former partners who was now a partner in Bennett Metcalfe, which had taken over the defendants' practice.

Two or three days before the writ was due to expire a process server instructed by the plaintiffs' solicitors attended at Bennett Metcalfe's offices and met a partner who had been a former partner of the defendants.

The process server carried him a copy of the writ, a form of acknowledgment of service, and a covering letter which indicated that service was intended to be effected.

When followed when the process server entered the partner's office he described the partner's office as the only feasible service was personal service.

The issue was whether the requirements of Order 65, rule 2 were satisfied.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (9th edition 1995) gave as the primary meaning of the transitive verb "leave": "cause to or let remain; depart without taking..."

There appeared to be a difference between those two meanings. One described a mere letting remain, the other an element of departure with a leaving behind.

The term "leaving" in Order 65, rule 2, was to be regarded in the former sense.

Once the intended recipient, assuming him to have knowledge of its nature, had been given a sufficient opportunity of possession of the document to enable him to exercise dominion over it for any period of time, however brief, the document had been left with him within the sense intended by the rule.

Mr Justice Singer agreed.

Solicitors: Eversheds, Nottingham; Burrows & Wiley, Bristol.

Daughter has no title to flat

Brent London Borough Council v Knightley and Another

The daughter of a former secure tenant who died while the property was subject to a possession order, suspended on conditions which had been breached had no interest in the property which would enable her to resist a warrant for possession.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Hirst, Lord Justice Aldous referred to Burrows v Brent London

Borough Council [1996] 1 WLR 1448. The right to appeal from a suspended possession order was not an interest in land which could be inherited.

To be a tolerated trespasser in the terms referred to by Lord Brownlee-Wilkinson in *Burrows* [at p145CC] one had to be a trespasser tolerated by law. There was no right given to a person in Ms Knightley's position to revive a tenancy where no tenancy existed when her mother died.

Mr Justice Singer agreed.

Solicitors: Eversheds, Nottingham; Burrows & Wiley, Bristol.

BT in talks on deal for Asia-Pacific

From RACHEL BRIDGE
IN SYDNEY

BRITISH TELECOM is in talks with Telstra, Australia's biggest phone company, about forming an alliance to tackle the Asia-Pacific market, it emerged yesterday.

The revelation came after reports in Australia that the two companies had been discussing a possible alliance, code-named Project Hutton, over the past few months. Peter Abery, Telstra's director of strategic planning and development, said: "I can confirm that we have had and expect to have a range of discussions with British Telecom, as well as other major players in our industry, with a view to forming an alliance. We have had a relationship with BT for many years and there has been contact at a senior level."

A BT spokesman in Sydney yesterday refused to comment on reports of an alliance with Telstra, but said its global strategy was one of joint ventures. He added: "Asia Pacific is now a major focus for BT and as such we are talking to all the major players in the region, including Telstra, to see how we might work together more closely in the future."

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Ricardo hit by costs of shake-up in US

RICARDO GROUP, the UK automotive design consultancy, yesterday reported pre-tax losses of £13.7 million for the half-year to December 30, reflecting the high cost of the restructuring of its troubled operations in America. Losses included exceptional charges of £16.3 million from the disposal of the non-automotive businesses, comprising a £2.6 million charge to cover costs and the discount of the sale against assets and a £13.7 million goodwill adjustment. Profits in the first half of the previous year were £2.4 million.

The company said pre-exceptional profits were little changed at £2.5 million (£2.4 million) on turnover that rose 1.3 per cent to £52.1 million. Normalised earnings were 3.0p a share (3.4p) and the dividend was held at 2p. The shares were unchanged at 133.5p yesterday. Rodney Westhead, who became chief executive in November upon the departure of Christopher Ross, said the company would now focus on its automotive engineering consultancy business.

Ford boost for Swansea

FORD plans to invest £25 million at its plant in Swansea, South Wales, safeguarding 1,100 jobs, the company announced yesterday. The funding will enable the plant to increase its existing output of wheel hubs and drums and to expand into producing brake discs. The plant exports components to Europe and North America. Last year 450,000 individual components were made at the factory, including axles and transmission arms. Its products can be found in most Ford marques from the Ka to the Scorpio.

Cobham subsidiary deal

SARGENT FLETCHER (SFI), the US subsidiary of Cobham, the UK aerospace engineering company, has completed the \$4 million purchase of the aircraft external fuel tank business of Derflair Industries. SFI has acquired the right and title to substantially all of the assets, inventory, order book, intellectual property and manufacturing rights. The product line will be moved to SFI's El Monte site in southern California and will help to consolidate SFI's position in the North American and worldwide markets.

Jermyn assets rise

JERMYN INVESTMENT PROPERTIES reported a 23 per cent rise in net asset value to 223.3p a share, fully diluted, in 1996. Consolidated investment assets rose to £53.31 million from £29.73 million, helped by acquisitions. At the pre-tax level profits rose to £1.32 million from £1.07 million and earnings improved to 5.5p a share from 5.49p. A final dividend of 3.1p a share lifts the total to 5.5p, from 4.5p in the previous year. Shares in Jermyn Investment Properties rose 4p to 167.5p.

Alumasc disappoints

SHARES of Alumasc fell 53.5p to 318p yesterday after the engineering and construction products company reported pre-tax profits little changed at £6.53 million (£6.7 million) for the half year to December 30. Analysts had expected a small increase. The interim dividend was held at 2.45p a share. Payable from earnings that fell to 10.5p a share from 12p. John McCall, chairman and chief executive, said a number of businesses suffered a weak performance that would continue to affect results in the second half.

Regent Inns placing

REGENT INNS is raising £13.6 million via a share placing as the pub operator accelerates its expansion outside Greater London. The company has exchanged contracts on 21 sites, subject to licensing and planning permission, and has another 20 sites in the hands of solicitors. New shares are being placed with institutional investors by Kleinwort Benson at 325p each. Existing shares fell 4p to 334.5p yesterday. The company also announced that it has entered negotiations to sell its snooker division.

William Sinclair grows

WILLIAM SINCLAIR HOLDINGS, the supplier of products to the garden, leisure and pet markets, said it looked forward to the important spring garden season with confidence after lifting pre-tax profits to £2.24 million in the six months to December 30 from £1.76 million previously. Earnings were 6.9p a share, compared with 5.4p last time, and the interim dividend is increased to 2.1p a share from 1.9p. Shares in William Sinclair Holdings, rose 15p to 221.5p, a 12-month high.

Court of Appeal

'Prior notice' means in advance

Bainbridge v Circuit Foul UK Ltd
Before Lord Justice Hirst, Lord Justice Aldous and Lord Justice Schiemann
Judgment February 14

A clause allowing termination "without prior notice" in the rules of a company sick pay scheme, means without advance notice. The words did not mean that the employer could terminate the scheme without informing the scheme without terminating the employment.

There were two schemes, one covering absence for less than six months, and the second, the long-term scheme

هذا من لأمهل



■ PROFILE

Will the new men at the Barbican turn the RSC's absence in the summer months to their advantage?



■ MUSIC 1

The Houston Symphony goes for the epic sound under the baton of Christoph Eschenbach



■ MUSIC 2

... while Daniele Gatti shows his flair for Austrian repertoire with the Royal Philharmonic



■ TOMORROW
How successfully does Miller's *The Crucible* transfer to the screen? Read Geoff Brown on the new films

Barbican aims for a world service

Can the City's troubled arts centre be reinvented as London's international theatre? Richard Morrison reports

The Barbican is on the brink of a brave new era. But then, it usually is. After 20 years of construction and 15 years of turbulent operation (its birthday falls next Monday), the City of London's concrete culture palace has been through more eras than the average history book.

Its first brave new age was inaugurated in 1982, when the Queen opened it with the resounding declaration that it was "a wonder of the modern world". It certainly was. Most took years to work out how to find it and then how to get in without forcing open a fire exit. That was also the Era of Hopeless Idealism, when the London Symphony Orchestra nearly went bust attempting to fill its new home with avant-garde programmes at wacky times of day.

Then came the Era of Stroppy Thespians, which lasted for years. The resident Royal Shakespeare Company rubbished the Barbican at every turn, demanded changes to the theatre (granted), and periodically threatened to quit unless given big subsidy hikes by the Corporation of London and the Arts Council (granted). In 1995 the RSC announced that it was leaving anyway — at least for the summer, when London is full of tourists wanting to see the company.

What else? Well, who can forget the Detta Era, swiftly followed by the "Get Detta Out" Era? The brief but exhausting Barbican reign of the Irish businesswoman Baroness O'Cathain resulted in the resignation of 50 staff members — the last being the baroness herself, forced out after the LSO literally orchestrated her downfall.

And now? Again the Barbican has new brooms, new dreams. The baroness never disguised her contempt for the people she endearingly described as "arty-farty types"; she also left the Barbican with the most peculiar decor seen in a public building since the late Liberace hung up his suit. But now the centre has the ultra-cultured John Tusa at the helm: a man who, even when running the BBC World Service, rarely seemed to spend a night away from theatre, opera house or concert hall. The contrast

could not be greater. And as his arts director, Tusa has poached from the rival South Bank Centre one of the brighter arts plumes around, Graham Sheffield.

Sheffield bristles with ideas about how to fill the Barbican's theatres during the 22 summer weeks each year that the RSC will be absent. "We could have imported a Peter Hall-type repertory theatre company, or even put in a musical. But I warned something that did not duplicate the West End and also fitted our ethos as a subsidised arts centre."

"The main Barbican theatre has never been used to its full potential"

Sheffield wants to strike up partnerships with the trendier foreign festivals. "Lincoln Center, Vienna, BAM in New York, Holland: that's the sort of circuit I want to plug into. They haven't had a London partner, and they will add a contemporary but also popular edge to our programming."

Amazingly enough, Sheffield says, this sudden gust of foreign competition has actually strengthened the Barbican's relationship with its truculent theatre partner, the RSC. "We are working towards a very clear deal, whereby the RSC will manage the theatres on our behalf throughout the year. We will pay them a management fee, plus a programming fee for the 30 weeks of their own shows. The contract will be very specific as to who is providing what for whom. There will be no option for the RSC to go back to the Corporation and ask for more money if things get tight, as happened in the past."

The dream of turning the Barbican into London's international theatre (beginning with a *Ninagawa* epic in October) is just one of the bright ideas buzzing round the windy walkways. This summer the theatre will get a £1.9 million refurbishment, which (among other things) will enhance its orchestra pit and acoustics. That will prepare for the Royal Opera's visit in September, bringing Ra-

ghard von Britten's *Turn of the Screw* and Handel's *Julius Caesar*. Sheffield thinks the theatre has great potential for vocal and dance work. "You show directors the space and they love it. It's never been used to its full potential. That's not the RSC's fault; they have to transfer productions designed for Stratford."

Won't this emphasis on dance,

physical theatre and medium-scale

openings bring the Barbican into

competition with Sadler's Wells,

refurbished (with £30 million of

lottery money) and soon to reopen

up the road? Tusa and Sheffield

deflect this question by speaking

grandly of a "north-east cultural corridor" as an alternative to the West End. "There are a lot of good restaurants opening up in Clerkenwell," says the ever-optimistic Sheffield. He also claims to have worked out a "protocol" with Sadler's Wells, "whereby we are not programming Menno Cuningham against Bill Forsythe, or whatever".

Other plans? From next year the new brooms also want to mount an annual summer fortnight of theatre for and by children. This year there will probably be a circus on the sculpture court, presumably not with elephants.

And there are plans for a great

missionary campaign to tell the

residents of nearby London bor-

oughs about the Barbican. "How

many people out there use us as

their local cinema?" Sheffield asks.

The question is rhetorical, of

course. Tower Hamlets residents

don't, as a rule, use the Barbican at all. "It's a huge hole in our

marketing, and it would widen our

social and age profiles."

Naturally, there is a large "if" in

all this. The money has to be raised.

The Corporation of London gave

£1.7 million to the Barbican last

year, and although the superb LSO

concert seasons have given the City

cause for pride, there is less

satisfaction about the shenanigans

on the theatre side over the years.

Tusa and Sheffield need to retain

every penny of the Corporation's

grant if they are to realise their

plans. But the Corporation has

embarked on a tough spending

curb, and the Barbican is not

exempt. A cut of more than £1

million is currently mooted. Omnipotently, Michael Cassidy, the canny

lawyer who headed the Corpora-

tion's policy and resources commit-

tee, quit last December with the

prediction that the Corporation was

"beginning to show signs of

pulling in its horns".

So, rather late in the day, the

Barbican has begun a serious quest

for commercial sponsorship. "It is

strange," Sheffield admits, "that the

Barbican had never talked to its

neighbours. We have all these big

companies sitting on our doorstep,

yet many didn't know what the

Barbican had to offer. We've been

inviting businesses to dinner, and many say: 'We never knew you

had a conservatory, a cinema, an art gallery...'"

Now they do. But will they help

to bankroll the Barbican into its

latest brave new era? Let's hope that, for once, great expectations triumph over hard times.

CONCERTS: Cross-cultural new commission in Scotland; two excursions into the realms of emotion in London

Essence of Iona

Something about their body language as they prepared for the first chord of Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto suggested that Mitsuko Uchida and Christoph Eschenbach were about to forge a dynamic partnership. Both she elegantly impetuous as always, and he, brisk and businesslike, seemed eager to get things under way. And, from those tutti chords and cascading arpeggios, there emerged a common strength and sense of purpose that set the tone for the entire movement.

The authentic way to experience the collaboration will be to hear James MacMillan's music for strings and percussion in view of Sue Jane Taylor's sand-blasted glass panels, the latter mounted against a black background and so illuminated as to offer an eerie negative image of Iona seen across the sea. The composer and the sculptor are clearly both impressed not only by the beauty but also by the religious associations of the island, and they have both attempted to design textures which allow something of that spiritual dimension to be perceived beyond the surface.

It was a pity that the first performances of *Meditation on Iona* — given with evidently complete conviction by Joseph Swensen and the SCO in the City Hall, Glasgow, and the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh — could not have been presented in a more organised context. Strauss's *Ways* sounded oddly trivial after the MacMillan. And Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto, even with the prodigiously talented 14-year-old Karen Gomyo as soloist, is not the kind of work to be given a whole second half of a concert itself.

GERALD LARNER

Who dares wins

Houston SO/
Eschenbach
Barbican

With ferociously assertive playing in the tutti, while similarly yielding to more poetic instincts where required. These came to the fore much more in the Adagio — a wonderfully ripe meditation — while the finale was dispatched with due aplomb.

Heroism might also have been the watchword of Eschenbach's reading of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony — and certainly "heroic", as often, seemed a more appropriate subtitle than the composer's "Romantic". The opening string tremolando and horn calls had the sense of spaciousness that heralded a grandly conceived interpretation. In fact, it soon became evident that Eschenbach was going to waste no time in

setting things ablaze the very first tutti detonated a controlled explosion of brass tone. It sounded glorious, it was thrilling, but surely he had shot his bolt too early? And so it turned out. None of the climaxes that followed was able to achieve any greater level of intensity, and to make things worse, they often loomed suddenly out of the blue, denying the all-important organic nature of Bruckner's structures.

The second movement, in more subdued vein, was more successful, in that the big climax seemed a more inevitable conclusion to the argument. The rousing hunting-horn calls of the Scherzo found the orchestra in fine fettle — crisp brass complemented by sleek woodwind and well-upholstered strings — and the symphony ended in an uplifting blaze of colour.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Twin pillars of heady romance

RPO/Gatti
Barbican

figuration ostensibly occurs in a pompous C major.

Nobody would sense any spiritual element in this, although we might admire a technique of orchestration that suggests the approach of death and its ultimate release in graphic detail, just as Schoenberg handled his ensemble of strings only, enlarged from its original form for string sextet, with a skill that embraces both passion and tenderness. Gatti held these aspects in eloquent balance, and drew a lustrous quality of string playing that I have not heard from this orchestra for some time.

In transforming into words music a poem (by Richard Dehmel) telling of a woman whose present lover forgives her for bearing another man's child, and thereby "transfigures" the long night of their encounter, Schoenberg's masterly control of string texture becomes a temptation to romantic indulgence which Gatti successfully avoided by urging the work forward in a natural flow, giving cogent expression and articulation to the music's sensuous content.

Between these heady excursions into romantic hysteria, Alicia de Larrocha imparted a cool clarity and corrosive brilliance to Ravel's Piano Concerto with a fleet-fingered Minguet's hands in the 1960s or providing Parker-like alacrity for Clint Eastwood's movie *Bird*, McPherson gave 100 per cent — a mature master in peak form.

CHRIS PARKER

Is it Bird, or is it on another plane?

Charles
McPherson
Pizza Express

approach was intriguing. Where Edwards had relied on laid-back cajoling, McPherson preferred a more hands-on approach, constantly whispering encouragement to Brown in particular, and drawing a wonderfully crisp, assertive performance from him as a result. Newton, too, was sufficiently inspired to blow apart any notion that he is primarily

a luminously delicate player with a series of muscular solos. Overall, though, as the whoops and hollers marking the climaxes of his solos demonstrated, it was McPherson the audience had come to hear, and, great professional that he is, he did not disappoint even the most optimistic fan. As he has done throughout his career, whether gracing Mingus's bands in the 1960s or providing Parker-like alacrity for Clint Eastwood's movie *Bird*, McPherson gave 100 per cent — a mature master in peak form.

NOEL GOODWIN

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

JOSEPH ERBER

Age: 12

Musical prodigy: He has been composing since he was seven, and on Saturday will become the youngest person ever to have work performed by the LSO.



Name that tune: The LSO family concert at the Barbican will include *Song Without Words*, Joseph's duet for piano and viola, orchestrated by music animator Richard McNicol. "I have no idea how the piece will sound with so many instruments," Joseph says. "But I know I will play quite well."

How did all this happen? Joseph attended St Bartholomew's Primary School, Sydenham, with the son of the LSO's principal viola, Edward Vanderspar. Last year, Vanderspar admired Joseph's prize-winning piano composition for a schools competition and offered him £100 to write a duet.

Was he reluctant to take the commission? "No, I felt I was ready for it." It took him just over a month in the holidays to complete *Song*, using the Sibelius 7 computer program. He describes it as "sort of classical, and quite romantic". Debussy, Satie and Poulenc are influences.

Does he find composing easy? "Sometimes it's very frustrating waiting for ideas to come."

Musical parents: His father, James, is a composer. His mother, Deborah Roberts, is a professional singer. She says that Joseph's abilities are beyond her wildest dreams.

Does he write only classical music? Far from it. He has completed a jazz quintet for flute, oboe, two saxophones and bass guitar, and hopes to write choral music and a musical.

DANIEL ROSENTHAL

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Russian virtuoso pianist Evgeny Kissin plays a London recital

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Hinge and Bracket take the leads in Shaffer's *Lettice & Lovage*

VENUE: Opens tonight at the Belgrade, Coventry

THE TIMES ARTS

CHOICE 3
Adrian Noble brings *Cymbeline* to the stage at Stratford

VENUE: Opens tonight, Royal Shakespeare Theatre



POP
Contradictory but compelling, Jamiroquai turn on their abundant talent in Cambridge

CRAIG BARRETT/LONDON FEATURES

LONDON

SUNDAY Northern Exposure's Rob Morley joins Kevin Knight's cast in *Hector*, Waller's fascinating version of the *Antigone*. At 7pm, £10.00, at the Garrick, 100 Garrick Street, Covent Garden. Tel: 0171 580 2200. *Monday*: *Psychologically damaged GI (Matthew Ward believes he is dead. Or does he?) Comedy*, Portman Street, SW1 (0171-353 1731). Preview: tonight, 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

ON THE BEAT Richard Boll composes the 5th annual concert of the Antiphonal Singers, 11.30pm, £10.00, at the Metropolitan Police Band, who is the Metropolitan Police Male Voice Choir is conducted by Goran Petrić. 37th Floor, EC1 (0171-353 1731). Preview: tonight, 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

SOUTH DOWNTOWN A few doors away from Belgrave Square's 10th-floor piano recital at the Festival Hall, at 7.30pm. At the same time, Philip Pickard directs the New London Chorus in *Carmina Burana* at the John American, 2nd floor of the Early Music Series, 21am. Cannonball Soft, soprano Pia Agnew, tenor, and Michael

TODAY'S CHOICE
A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Mawsey

GLOUCESTERSHIRE George, baritone (Purcell Room, 7.30pm) at 7.30pm, the Queen Elizabeth Hall is the venue for a performance of *Persuasion*, a visually compelling and riotous musical comedy set in 20th-century South Bank, SE1 (0171-980 4259). Tonight, various times and venues.

ELSEWHERE COVENTRY Dr Eddie Hinge and David Head Bradwell star in *Lotte and Lovage*, a award-winning play, *Lettice & Lovage*, Belgrave Square (01203-550505). Opens today, Mon-Thurs, 7.30pm, Sat-Sun, 2.30pm and Sat-Sun, 4pm. Until April 5. £10. £12. 2.30pm. Until April 5.

ED THE GENERAL FROM AMERICA James Laurenson and Conn Roddy play Arnold and Washington, heading a live cast in Richard Nelson's play concerned with treachery but only love. At 7.30pm, £10.00, at the PPL Bars-on-Corso, EC2 (0171-938 9281). Tonight and tomorrow, 7.30pm; Thurs, 2pm. £10. 7pm.

GUYS AND DOLLS Richard Eyer's production of the Frank Loesser musical *Guys and Dolls* is at the New Theatre, 2nd floor, 21am. £10. £12. 2.30pm. Until April 5.

AMERICAN BUFFALO Douglas Mantini, Neil Shrike and Nicholas Stoller play the property drovers. Great choice: Lindsay Posner directs *Young Vic*, 66 The Cut, SE1 (0171-929 6762). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, until Wed, 14.30pm, £10. £12. 2.30pm. Until April 5.

THE SHALLOW END Lucy Stephenson's musical treatment of *Waiting for Godot* stars Helen Hobson as Catya. With songs by Tim Rice. *Ladies' Apolito*, Queen's Paradise, 100 Queen's Gate, SW7 (0171-415 6550). Mon-Sat, 8pm. Until April 5.

WOMEN ON THE VERGE OF NERVOUSNESS Brian Cox plays a young architect who probably doesn't have a good move. One-man play written and directed by Conor McPherson

SHAKESPEARE *The Shallow End*, 8pm. Mon-Sat, 8pm. Until April 5.

WOMEN IN THE STREETS *Women in the Streets*, 8pm. Mon-Sat, 8pm. Until April 5.

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■ THEATRE 1
The unknown Tennessee: the RSC and others dust off many of the rarer Williams plays



■ THEATRE 2
At the Riverside Studios, a new play about a miscarriage of justice falls short on quality



■ THEATRE 3
... while the fine work of the American writer Susan Glaspell is revived at the Orange Tree



■ OFFER
Special prices for the latest John Godber production: see Theatre Club for details

THEATRE: Why Southern discomfort is flavour of the month. Plus a court case re-examined, and an American playwright re-assessed

A return ticket to Tennessee

There's more to Tennessee Williams than *Streetcar*, as British audiences are about to discover. Matt Wolf reports

Tennessee Williams's reputation over the last decade or so has rested on his biggest plays — *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* — and two or three others staged on both sides of the Atlantic since the playwright's death in 1983.

But the most recent Williams revival on Broadway was something different — the infrequently performed *Summer and Smoke*. And in the next fortnight, three of Williams's more obscure plays — two of them never seen professionally in Britain, the third not for 40 years — are receiving important productions.

Tomorrow, the RSC opens in Stratford its first Williams staging, *Camino Real*, which was last directed by Peter Hall in London in 1957, with Denholm Elliott and Ronnie Barker in the cast; its Stratford director is Steven Pimlott. Then next month the Cheek By Jowl touring company makes its first-ever venture into the American repertoire with Williams's *Out Cry*, a 1973 Broadway flop; it opens in Cheltenham before arriving at the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith late in April. And a few nights later, previews start at Plymouth's Drum Theatre of *Tiger Tail*, based on Williams's screenplay for the 1956 film *Baby Doll*. The cast includes Paul Herbig, who in 1983 was Stanley to Sheila Gish's Blanche in *The Glass Menagerie*.

That's not all. Later this year, again at the Lyric Hammersmith,

will come the London transfer of Philip Prowse's recent Glasgow production of Williams's *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*. Rupert Everett, in cross-dressing mode, will take on the Tallulah Bankhead/Elizabeth Taylor role of the ageing siren, Mrs Goldfarb.

Why all this activity? In part it reflects a British interest in the author's canon that has always surpassed that shown in Williams's own country, where conservative, celebrity-laden revivals have been the norm. *Orpheus Descending*, for instance, would never have travelled to Broadway in 1989 with Vanessa Redgrave had Peter Hall not revived the play successfully the previous year in the West End. But mainly it has to do with the death, just over three years ago, of Williams's longest friend and keeper of his estate, Maria St Just, who kept such a watchful eye on his work that its full range rarely got performed.

"Maria did keep a very tight grip on things," Tom Erhardt, the worldwide agent for the Williams estate, says of Lady St Just, who is thought to have favoured Peter Hall and Richard Eyre as Williams interpreters to the exclusion of virtually everyone else. "She wouldn't let anybody else do Tennessee for a very long time. If Maria had been alive, I'm sure she would not, for instance, have allowed Sam Mendes to direct *The Glass Menagerie*."

Erhardt points out that several people over time had asked to do

Camino Real, and "Maria would not permit it. The thing is, it hadn't been seen for a long, long time, and she felt there would be a lot of critical attention focused on it; she didn't want to take a chance on an unisoned quantity." (Last year, exactly such a chance was taken in Cincinnati, Ohio, with the premiere of a newly discovered Williams play, *The Notebook of Trigorin*, starring Lynn Redgrave.)

Hall disputes this assessment of St Just, arguing that "the resurgence of Tennessee is very largely due to her care and enthusiasm. It's simply that she was an opinionated lady who left quite a few people with sore heads." But Barbara Matthews, Cheek By Jowl's administrator, acknowledges a "loosening-up" of control over the plays: "I got the feeling we would have had the rights to *Out Cry* earlier."

What do these plays tell us about a writer who retains as singular a voice as any in contemporary theatre? "It's astonishing how much it reveals of him in a very personal way," says Timothy Walker, the director of *Out Cry*. Walker believes the play anticipates the psychosexual rags-of-war so popular in American theatre, such as Sam Shepard's *Fool For Love*, which premiered 11 years later.

As for *Camino Real*, director Pimlott pays tribute to an American heart and guts, alongside a free-wheeling nature that seems deeply European. Requiring a cast of 25, the play makes financial demands more easily met outside the US, where characters such as Byron, Marguerite Gautier and Don Quixote may count for more, as well. "People say *Camino* is flawed, but at least half of Shakespeare is majorly flawed," says Pimlott. "Tennessee off his form is still a million times better than most people on theirs."

• *Camino Real* opens tomorrow at the RSC in Stratford (01895 295623); *Out Cry* opens on March 5 at the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham (01242 572573); *Tiger Tail* opens on March 10 at the Drum Theatre, Plymouth (01752 267222)

Tennessee Williams sitting in Sloane Square in 1959 before *Orpheus Descending* opened at the Royal Court; that play was revived nearly 30 years later by Peter Hall



Poor showing for poor Stefan

THE case of Stefan Kiszko (his name is changed to Ivan Mitrovich in this play) is deeply shocking. A simple, slightly inadequate, home-loving son of refugees who wholeheartedly believed in the fairness and decency of the British way of life, he was falsely accused of the murder of a young girl and imprisoned for 16 years before his

name was cleared. This play by Fouad Zloof and Eva Lynn is fired by the desire to right a wrong, but Kiszko's cause is little furthered by so inept a piece of theatre.

The production by Hugh Beaudesert-Billings does little to animate the bad facts of the case. Each of the nine actors plays a range of solicitors, barristers, magistrates

and policemen, but there is not a fully developed character among them. The case is so clearly weighted that it is intellectually frustrating and emotionally unengaging.

The most glaring omission from the play is the absence of "Ivan" himself. Since he is the most interesting character it is an offence to the drama to exclude him, and to do him no favours. We hear so much about this 23-year-old prepubescent boy, whose physical maturity was stunted by a lack of the male hormone until he was prescribed testosterone injections, that he becomes more of a bogeyman in our minds, albeit one who is horribly wronged.

The one character who lives

for us is his steadfast mother Charlotte, who was with him at the time of the murder but was not believed in court. With very little money and no knowledge of the legal system, she campaigned on his behalf for 16 years until the glaring flaws in the case were unearthed. After so many years of victimisation in prisons and psychiatric hospitals, the innocent Kiszko died within a month.

As Charlotte, Anne Cheevey carries the whole emotional weight of the play, though her spirited and sensitive performance is hampered by an unsatisfactory script. Her naive belief in human goodness and truth led him unintentionally to prejudice Kiszko's chances of a lighter sentence. She died within five months of Kiszko's death. That injustice cannot be righted, though her story at least will be remembered.

CLARE BAYLEY

Ideals in danger

THE American playwright Susan Glaspell (1876-1948) was reintroduced to us last year when Sam Walters directed *The Verge*, a study of awkward idealism that struck me as poor stuff. Very different is the present play, again directed by Walters, where Glaspell's qualities as a dramatist and social analyst come boldly across.

Glaspell was among the earliest to use the stage to state that the American Dream was now rancid. Here she suggests two turning-points: the boom years that followed the Civil War, replacing earlier ideals with greed; and the redefinition of Americanism that came with the First World War which demolished those who did not fit the pattern.

Her play begins on Silas Morton's farm in Illinois in 1879. His mother (Sheila Burrell) was the first white woman in the area and Silas himself (Mark Kingdom) was born in the covered wagon that brought the family there, and from the window can be seen the hill he refuses to sell because it was sacred to Black Hawk's Indians. His close friend Felix (Francis Matthews) is a cultured Hungarian nobleman exiled for taking part in the revolution of 1848.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Inheritors
Orange Tree, Richmond

Inspired by him, Silas donates the hill for a college to be built where "ideas can flow from mind to mind like seeds".

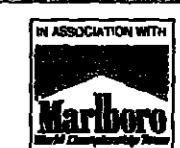
Facts and feelings have to be compressed into this first quarter of the play; and likewise 40 years later, when Glaspell introduces the next generation of the two families, now intermarried and facing issues that test earlier principles. The new victims are Asian Indians, protesting at British tyranny and about to be deported so as not to jeopardise the college's appeal for state funding.

Only Madeline, the radical granddaughter of Silas and Felix, takes up their cause, and at last the play strides forward into personal and political motives. List Stevenson invests Madeline with the passion of youth, torn between different duties. The early material burdens the play, but the second half is a well-crafted denunciation of the true enemies of democracy.

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For more information, please complete the coupon below and return it to:

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The VAT man cometh

Dixie Nichols on a hot line that separates the payers from the non-payers in the building trade

Customs and Excise last September launched a telephone hot line to enable people to inform on builders who evade VAT payments. Now they are taking about 40 calls a week. Half their leads come from disgruntled homeowners whose cash-in-hand builders have let them down and half come from builders who have tendered for the job and have been undercut by rivals who are not playing it by the book.

When calling in the builders, most people will go to a couple of companies for a quote. One might be an established local firm and the other might be the man that a friend used to get a roof repaired. The local firm will send in a written quote which will say plus VAT. The other quote might well be verbal, "cash unless you want to pay the VAT". So the first firm is going to be under pressure to lose their VAT or not do the job. Few people can resist the temptation to save 17.5 per cent.

Peter Crow of the old, established Essex builders G.Crow and Son has seen his small works business "virtually wiped out" since the extension of VAT to alterations and extensions in 1989. The company used to employ 24 men but is now down to 13. He is competing not just with the cash-in-hand merchants but also with the small painter and decorator or jobbing builder, who need not register for VAT and therefore does not have to charge it as long as its annual turnover is under the current £47,000 threshold.

Mr Crow understands the customer's point of view. He says: "Why should they pay 17.5 per cent extra just for the pleasure of having Mr Crow do their decorating?"

On small jobs a registered firm competing with an unregistered firm will lose out even though its quote before VAT is considerably lower. I have personally seen documentation for one house renovation where the successful unregistered firm quoted £18,920 while the competition quoted £16,409 but still lost the job because it had to add VAT, which took the total to £19,280.58.

David Carter of Carebuild Ltd, a small Berkshire building firm employing eight men, says the introduction of VAT has been "instrumental in destroying the goodness in the industry and has pushed decent companies to the wall." Mr Carter says he is put under pressure by customers to forget about the VAT. "We lose a job after job because we have to charge VAT," he says. "The desire for avoidance



A painter, decorator or builder does not have to pay VAT if annual turnover is less than £47,000

- VAT is not payable on building work on new buildings and on some listed buildings
- Some builders who are not registered charge VAT and pocket the extra. You can check their status on the hot line
- Any builder employing a full-time labourer will find it hard to keep under the yearly threshold given the cost of materials involved
- Further information: Call the VAT construction hot line on 0800 550 400/450.

is universal. Doctors, dentists, housing associations and private householders cannot claim back the VAT, so don't want to pay." One of the ways around this is to divide work up and use unregistered contractors.

There is a massive amount of evasion going on, with many unregistered traders earning well above the threshold. There are also registered companies who do some jobs for the books and some for cash-in-hand. Customs and Excise believe the construction industry is responsible for a quarter of all lost VAT revenue.

Mr Carter is doubtful that the VAT inspectors will unearth much evasion. "I'm convinced they

haven't got the right knowledge, they don't know the first thing about construction and have no idea how it is done. They don't seek advice and they behave like a bull in a china shop. In 20 years I have never known any of the cash-in-hand brigade get caught."

The September initiative was a pilot scheme and little has been done to publicise the existence of the hot line. The 5,000-strong Building Employers Confederation, who have been pressing for action against VAT evaders for some time, have circulated whistle-blowing forms to its members and these are coming back at about five a week.

Liz Bridge, the confederation's tax expert, says: "We've demonstrated that we have not been barking about a non-existent problem, and that Customs can earn money through its investigation." She says that the industry is able to supply leads as it tends to work and that it knows the costs involved.

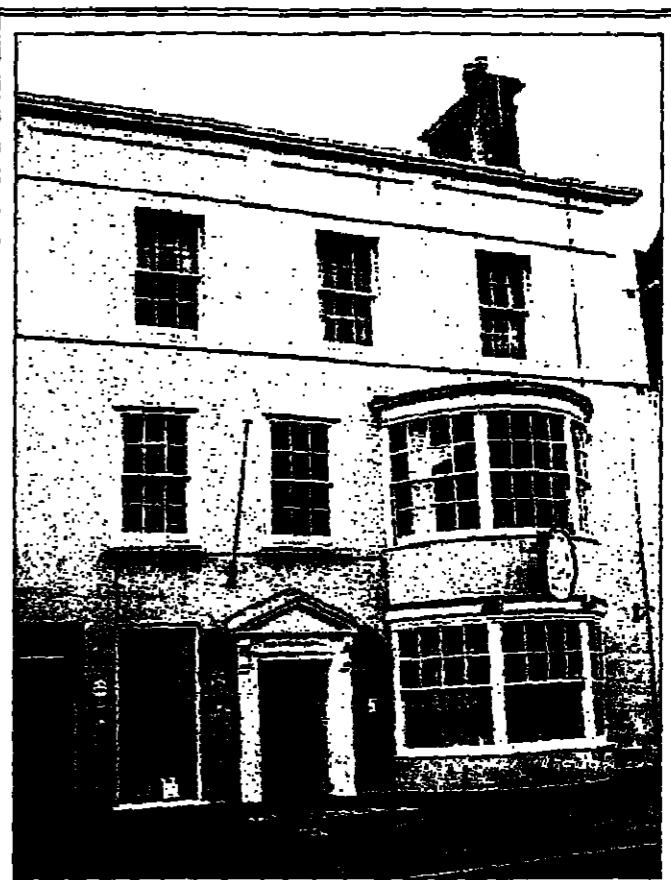
Customs and Excise's only specialist Construction Compliance team is based in North London. It has handled 300 active cases in six months, which have triggered 14 registrations for VAT from the shadow economy. The impact may not be massive, but word will spread.

The whole governmental spend-to-save initiative is bad news for the evader, and some builders are now running scared. The sharing of information between departments means that once one department has finished with a wrongdoer, he or she is passed on to the next and the next until there is no money left. Customs and Excise periodically go through local-paper advertising and the Yellow Pages, checking advertisers against its lists of those registered for VAT.

Where do householders stand in all this? Can they be shown to have colluded in VAT evasion and find themselves in trouble? The good news is that a householder's position is secure: it is not illegal to offer cash payment. The responsibility for the proper payment of VAT lies firmly with the contractor. The risk for householders is that they have no guarantees if there is no proper paperwork.

Those builders in the shadow economy who are beginning to think it might be time to join the VAT club can expect a sympathetic reception. A Customs and Excise spokesperson says: "We will look closely at all mitigating circumstances. If they come clean, then we do not want to see them go bankrupt."

So if guilty builders want to avoid being nailed to the floor, perhaps they should have a quiet word in an official ear.



The Mock Turtle: Ronay-recommended, for sale at £215,000

IN THE MARKET

Fine food with all the trimmings

ONE OF Dorchester's finest restaurants is for sale. Asking price for the Egon Ronay-recommended Mock Turtle Restaurant, complete with two self-contained flats and parking space is £215,000. The restaurant in the heart of Thomas Hardy country, is mentioned in the Michelin and Good Food guides. The county archives tell of a 1824 storm in which the chimneys of the building collapsed, killing the rector and his wife, who lived there. Details from Jackson-Stops & Staff, Dorchester, 01305 251400.

and offers in excess of £600,000

are sought for the 47-year lease.

The managing agents say a

charge of £140,000 would have

applied to the apartment this

financial year if normal service

charges had been in force.

Details from Savills, 145 Ken-

sington Church Street, London,

0171-221 1751.

Holding back

THE SHORTAGE of property for sale shows no sign of easing, according to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in its latest survey of the housing market in the three months to the end of January. Reasons for delays in selling are that owners are waiting for the summer payout by building societies being "demutualised", and the institution says, an unwillingness to sell before they have found another property.

Free service

SOMETHING for nothing? A two-bedroom, first-floor flat on Hyde Park has no service charges, because of an ancient clause in the lease, even though the landlord is required to maintain and insure the building, provide hot water, central heating and employ a resident caretaker. The flat, which needs some updating, has two reception rooms and two bathrooms.

A £1 MILLION glass-walled penthouse is to be built on top of one of the oldest warehouses in Leeds, Simpson's Fold, which dates back to 1520. The penthouse, with solar-powered heating, a private running track, gymnasium and staff quarters, has been designed by Gordon Carey and is being developed by the Leeds Loft Company.

24 hours.

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Dunbeath Castle offered at £3 million

Buyers with a keen sense of value are now coming forward

nine-acre farm dating back to 1709 is a bargain, says Peter Hayward of Peter Hayward Associates "for anyone seeking land or a commercial opportunity".

There are still bargains in the capital. A two-bedroom flat at 29, Sloane Gardens,

SW1, has been reduced from £650,000 to £635,000, with a 47-year lease. Agents Douglas & Gordon report that the flat is now under offer.

Also in SW1 is 38, Chapel Street, a five-bedroom family house, which has been on the market for over a year. With only 35 years left on the lease, the house has been reduced by over £200,000, from £800,000 to £595,000.

Witham House in Langrick, Lincolnshire, has been reduced from £310,000 to £275,000 since it went onto the market last June, with an indoor swimming pool thrown in. The five-bedroom country house has five acres, outbuildings and greenhouses.

Further afield, Chalet Brames near Meribel, in France, has been on the market for almost two years and its price reduced from about £25 million to about £1.8 million.

One long-unsold property, Les Louves near St Tropez, did finally move last week. It was reduced last year from £5.9 million (about £1 million) to £4.6 million. The current strength of the pound may have helped prompt the sale.

AMANDA LOOSE

• Floss Strutt & Parker 01423 561724; Netherby Hall: Jackson Stops & Staff 0171 589 4532; Meadow Bank House: Savills 0151-225 8907; Dunbeath Castle: Knight Frank 0121 225 8771; Fiddleback Farm: Peter Hayward Associates 0128 810300; Flat 4, 29 Sloane Gardens: Douglas & Gordon 0171-225 1225; 38 Chapel Street: Beaney Pearce 0171-589 1353; Witham House: Strutt & Parker 0838 433123; Chalet Brames: Knight Frank 0171-629 8711

مكتبة من رام الله

FOOTBALL

Juninho leaves problem for Middlesbrough

BY DAVID MADDOCK AND RICHARD HOBSON

AS Stockport County prepared yesterday for the first leg of their Coca-Cola Cup semi-final against Middlesbrough, their Edgeley Park pitch lay in pieces, with the groundsmen struggling to lay new turf over large areas of previously waterlogged earth.

Nevertheless, the pitch will be ready in time for the game tonight — Stockport have offered assurances that, even if it rains, the match will go ahead after it was postponed because of a deluge a week ago — and it is Middlesbrough, of the FA Carling Premiership, who find themselves worrying about somehow putting patchwork pieces together. In their case, however, absenteeism is the problem.

Four defenders — Derek Whyte, Phil Whelan, Steve Vickers and Nigel Pearson — are all doubtful with injuries, while, worse still, Juninho, the Brazil midfield player, has

opted for international duty rather than the attractions of battling a howling gale and a pumped-up Nationwide League second division side on a wet Wednesday night.

Juninho will play half a game for his country against Poland in Rio de Janeiro and even the prospect of a big semi-final could not persuade him to stay in England.

"I was becoming the forgotten man for my country," he said. "I was overlooked so many times that it was becoming very concerning. I am happy at Middlesbrough, but playing for my country means so much to me, far more than anything else in football. The Brazil coach is already thinking about his squad for the World Cup and I want to make sure I am in those thoughts."

Stockport, predictably enough for underdogs, do not have similar international problems, but they do have

Southampton likely to be stalked by Fear

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

WIMBLEDON, whose tigerish qualities have been in evidence throughout a remarkably successful season, are likely to have Fear in their heart when they run out at The Dell tonight for an FA Carling Premiership match agains Southampton.

There will be no mellowing of their traditional tenacity, simply a replacement of the injured Vinnie Jones's combative midfield talents with those of Peter Fear. The 23-year-old Londoner, who came on as a substitute for Oyvind Leonhardsen — another absentee tonight — in the victory over Arsenal on Sunday, is likely to make only his seventh start of the season.

"He belies his name," Joe Kinnear, the Wimbledon manager, said. "He has no fear. And he's another example of the squad we are building. It has got to the

stage now when I can bring people into the side and drop others out but still have confidence that everybody will do their job."

Wimbledon are 12 points behind Manchester United, the leaders, in the Premiership but have three games in hand. They are also in the semi-finals of the Coca-Cola Cup and last eight of the FA Cup.

Kinnear said: "We've got to focus on the league and forget the cups for a while. Europe next season is still our main aim and it would be marvellous to achieve it by finishing high in the table."

Southampton, whose relegation plight became even more serious after they lost a two-goal lead against Sheffield Wednesday on Saturday and slipped to 3-2 defeat, could recall Matthew Keane and Robbie Slater in midfield.

Ferguson rules out Suker move

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

DAVAR SUKER, the Croatia international, travelled back to Spain last night after talks with Arsenal but without making contact with Manchester United. Suker will leave Real Madrid at the end of the season and he has indicated he will definitely be coming to England.

The champions, though, appear out of the running after Alex Ferguson, the United manager, ruled out a possible move. Chelsea could rival Arsenal for his signature.

Peter Schmeichel, desperate to clear his name after allegations that his feud with Ian Wright that flared in Manchester United's match at Highbury last week was sparked by a racial insult aimed at Wright when United entertained Arsenal at Old Trafford in November, is threatening to go to court.

The claims are still being investigated by the police, but Maurice Watkins, the Manchester United director and solicitor, said: "Reports that Peter is taking legal advice are true, but other than to confirm that I don't want to make any further comment."

John Ebbsell, the Everton midfield player, is poised to be reunited with Howard Kendall, his former manager at Goodison Park. Kendall, now in charge at Sheffield United, has made a bid of £1 million for the former England B and Under-21 international, Jonathan O'Connor, the England Under-21 player, has committed his future to Everton by signing a three-year contract.

Kyle Lighthorne, the Walsall forward, rejected the offer of a long-term contract with the Nationwide League second division side yesterday, opening the way for a renewed bid from Coventry City. The Bermuda international is keen to play in the FA Carling Premiership. Walsall have already turned down an offer of £400,000 from Coventry.

Mick Jones will be offered the post of Plymouth Argyle manager later this week. Jones has been caretaker-manager since Neil Warnock was sacked three weeks ago.

Pearce pledges to keep tight control on spending targets

BY RICHARD HOBSON

NOT GOING to pay silly money," Pearce said. "We need to score goals but I think that any manager of a side near the bottom of the table would say the same thing."

Possible targets include Pierre van Hoofdonk, who is unsettled at Celtic and Dean Holdsworth, who has lost his first-team place at Wimbleton.

Pearce will reconsider his own position at the end of the season. If he remains in charge the club is likely to appoint a managing director to absorb some of the workload. If Coventry City win the FA Cup this season, then Ogrizovic's penalty save against Blackburn Rovers in the fourth round will be highlighted as one of the crucial moments in their passage to success. Coventry won the tie 2-1 and face Derby County at the Baseball Ground tonight, with a home quarter-final awaiting Middlesbrough.

This is the most open

England must stay at home

BY JOHN GOODBODY

FIFA, the world governing body of football, yesterday ruled out proposals by the British Government to use the lavish new stadiums in Scotland and Wales in England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup.

However, it has also been because, by 1999, Cardiff will have a rebuilt national stadium. In Scotland, Murrayfield in Edinburgh holds 60,000, Celtic Park will soon house 60,000, Ibrox 48,000, and Hampden Park 50,000.

Jim Parry, the chief executive of the Scottish Football Association, spoke to the Prime Minister earlier this month and said later: "He reinforced our view that the Government was supportive of a World Cup bid involving stadiums throughout Britain." The home nations had accepted that only England would qualify automatically as hosts for the finals.

However, the Football Asso-



Point duty: Ogrizovic, veteran of Coventry City's 1987 FA Cup Final win, directs traffic around his goal. Photograph: Marc Aspinall

Ogrizovic still a force for boys in sky blue

Richard Hobson meets a goalkeeper with ambitions to earn a return visit to the scene of the finest hour of his career

They used to take a simple view of crime prevention in the Nottinghamshire Constabulary. The biggest men had the highest-profile postings in the areas where trouble was expected. Few arms of the law were longer than those of PC Steve Ogrizovic.

Twenty years on, Ogrizovic finds himself repelling strikers rather than Saturday-night drunks in Nottingham city centre. He does so with no less vigour and a clear-up rate that would be the envy of most modern police forces.

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The last thing people want to be reminded of at the moment is what happened ten years ago," Ogrizovic said. "It was a big thing at the time because we had never won it before but at the moment a repeat is still just a dream.

The Premier League sides still in the draw will think that this is the best chance

they will have for many years because of the teams who have been knocked out. All of the sides will be fired up that little bit more and, whenever wins, I think there will be some great matches."

Ogrizovic and Brian Borrows are the only survivors from that team still with the club and, while Ogrizovic is reluctant to reflect on the biggest day of his career, progress this season dictates that people are demanding he trawls his memory.

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If there were "no stars" then the side is packed with expensive signings now. Indeed, individually, Ogrizovic believes the squad must be the strongest in the history of the club. Against that, a league position of fifth from

understudy to Ray Clemence at Liverpool and rarely made an appearance.

"The funny thing is that although Ray kept me out, it is partly thanks to him that I am still playing now," Ogrizovic said. "That generation of goalkeepers — you can look at Joe Corrigan, Phil Parkes and Pat Jennings as well — shows that it was possible to play into your late thirties at least. It is interesting to see how few of the top clubs have young goalkeepers nowadays because managers recognise the importance of experience."

He is not sure how he will utilise his football skills and knowledge when he finally retires. There is one avenue away from the game that remains open. "When I left the force, to join Chesterfield in 1977, I was told I could go back if things did not work out," he said. "I do not suppose they realised I would be off the beat for this long though."

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SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

As declarer I had all the clues on this hand, from the match between King (the eventual winner) and Armstrong in the trials for the 1996-97 English team. I came to the wrong conclusion.

Dealer West

Game all IMPs

+AQ2
+J7542
+10
+J1092
+109
+VK3
+Q9863
+AQ64

+K
+10986
+AKJ7
+8753
+J976543
+AQ
+542
+K

W	N	E	S
1 NT (1-14)	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 D	Pass	3 S	Pass
Pass	4 S	Double	All Pass

Contract: Four Spades doubled, by South. Lead: six of diamonds

East's 2 NT asked West to bid his better minor. Bizarre to use this deservedly little-known convention on a hand only 4-4 in the minors.

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KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Jersey International

Andrew Webster scored a huge success in the Deloitte & Touche Jersey International when he captured sole first prize ahead of three grandmasters, including the reigning British champion. Scores at the top were Webster 6½, Hodgeson and Bogdan Lalic 5½; Simons, Smalbone and reigning British champion Chris Ward 3. Britain's top woman player, Susan Lalic, was among those on 4½.

The following game demonstrates Webster's clear blend of strategic preparation and tactical aggression. After a slow opening, White engineers a sudden and dramatic breakthrough on the f7 square.

White Webster
Black Okoszeme

Jersey, February 1997

English Opening

1 c4

2 Nf3

3 g3

4 d3

5 Bg5

6 e3

7 Nc3

8 Nf2

9 e4

10 Nf3

11 Qd2

12 Nc3

13 Qc2

14 c3

15 b3

16 b4

17 Ne4

18 Nc5

19 Nc6

20 Qd3

21 a4

22 Ng2

23 e5

24 ex5

25 Rf2

26 Rf6

27 Rf7

28 Ng7

29 Rg7

30 Rg7

Black resigns

Diagram of final position

A B C D E F G H

8 ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗

7 ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗

6 ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗

5 ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗

4 ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗

3 ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗

2 ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗

1 ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗ ♗

a b c d e f g h

London v Beijing starts

A match between teams from London and Beijing started yesterday and runs until Sunday. Grandmasters Chris Ward, Neil McDonald and Keith Arkell are taking on a team of Chinese grandmasters from Beijing. Wang Zili, Ye Jiangchuan and Peng Xianmin. The venue is the London College of Traditional Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, Finchley, London, and rounds are taking place from 1pm to 6pm. Spectators are welcome, further details from the organisers on 0181-202 0982.

Times book

The Times Winning Moves 2 contains 240 chess puzzles from international grandmaster Raymond Keene's daily column in The Times, and is available now from bookshops or from B.T. Batsford Ltd (tel: 01763 21276) at £6.99 plus postage and packing.

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Suba — Watson, Watson, Farley and Williams, London 1989. White has sacrificed two pawns to gain a lead in development. How did he now recoup on his investment with interest?

S

If not unbelievable, then truly unspeakable

This was a true story, we were told at the beginning of *No Child of Mine* (ITV). It had to be, because it was a rotten made-up one.

For those who missed either the programme or the predictable brouhaha that preceded it, this was the story of Kerry, who from the age of 10 was sexually abused by just about every adult she came in contact with. Mother, father, stepfather, care worker, pimp, lorry drivers — it was a long, depressing and quite extraordinary list. Her mother?

Again and again, during a film that ITV quite properly showed at a late hour, that opening statement came back to me. "This was a true story." As someone I am trained to think "But it isn't". As someone from a nice, safe, middle-class background, my instincts were "No, it can't possibly be." But it was, it said so at the beginning, so it had to be. Didn't it?

My doubts you see, never did quite disappear and this I eventually concluded was not entirely my fault. Peter Kosminsky, the producer, had taken us on a journey of depravity that was both beyond belief and beyond the credible boundaries of dramatisation. We needed facts (how common is mother-daughter abuse?), we needed information (are pimps really allowed to stand outside the gates of children's homes?) and above all we needed corroboration. Kosminsky has it — it says so in the press release he sent to journalists. Unfortunately, he did not have where it mattered last night on the screen.

What he did have was a quite outstanding performance from Brooke Kinsella as Kerry. It was the sort of performance that Dustin Hoffman or Daniel Day-Lewis would have been proud of — all eyes, body language and utter concentration. And while it was

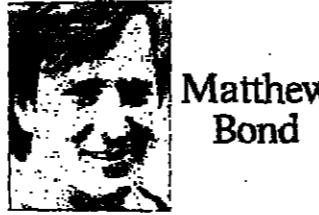
easy to warm to Colin Salmon, who played the teacher who finally realised things were wrong, the real praise belongs to the actors who took on the thankless roles of Kerry's mother, father and stepmother Sharon Small, Bill Geraghty and Geoffrey Church. May the rest of their careers be blessed with heroes and happy endings.

Having opted for dramatisation as the best way of telling the story, Kosminsky employed intelligent restraint in what he did and did not show. While never succumbing to prurience, he made it quite clear what sort of abuse we were dealing with but barring one brief, distressing but justifiable rape scene we never saw any of it. People may not like the story he was telling, but he had done his utmost to ensure they would not be sidetracked into criticising the manner of its telling.

If deciding what was true was the problem with *No Child of Mine*

REVIEW

Matthew Bond



Mine, the difficulty with *Inside Story: To Catch a Cheat* (BBC1) was working out which side to cheer for.

As someone in the privileged position of paying income tax and National Insurance for all confessions today, isn't it? I should have been supporting the benefit fraud investigators as they bravely battled to claw back some of the £3 billion a year paid to fraudulent

claimants. But it was awfully difficult.

What Ian Steward's film exposed was the mundane reality behind the headlines of the Government's Benefits Fraud Hotline: it may get 1,000 calls a day and, thanks to an unusual way of accounting, be able to point to impressive savings in payments, but it also has — because of the requirement to investigate every call — become a charter for those conducting personal vendettas.

"You're the sixth I've had this year," said a weary-sounding woman as yet another investigator asked her how many nights a week her boyfriend stayed at the flat. "I wish you people would just watch," she complained. That remained an option, replied her star-faced inquisitor.

The three quarters of calls to the hotline allege two basic sorts of fraud: claiming benefit while working and claiming benefit as a

single person when living with someone. The first should be easy to detect but isn't. The strange thing is, if all these people are unemployed, why are none of them at home during the day? complained another investigator.

As for the second, it appeared to be an enforcement nightmare ("how many nights a week does your boyfriend stay, on average?"), suggesting that the problem lies as much with the system as it does with the claimants.

But for all the insights the film offered, it never quite engaged in the way that this style of "people at work" documentary normally does. We go to know the faces of some of those involved but never their characters. As for the drama, well, there wasn't any. Every now and then a caption would flash up "eight people were duly signed off benefit" or "the next day the

claimant stopped claiming as a single person". I know, I should have cheered... I stilled a yawn.

Given the absolute avalanche of pre-publicity, it hardly seemed watching *Timewatch: Love Story* (BBC3), "Nazi-Jewish-lesbian love romp," screamed the newspapers; unable to contain their good fortune at getting three such emotive words into one headline. Carine Clay's film, however, adopted a thoughtful approach, charmingly retelling the story of the illicit love affair between Lilly Wurst, a Nazi medal-winning mother of four, and Felice Schragenheim, a young Jewish woman destined to die in Belsen.

Wurst is still alive and, together with "underground Jews" who somehow managed to survive in Berlin, provided a vivid and moving account of a love that definitely dared not speak its name. Not, at least, if its name was Schragenheim.

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (48959)
- 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (T) (50861)
- 9.00 Breakfast News Extra (T) (8391591)
- 9.20 Style Challenge (1021930)
- 9.45 Kilroy (5367794)
- 10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (53687)
- 11.00 News (T), regional news and weather (6972997)
- 11.05 The Really Useful Show (578359)
- 11.35 Change That (5857775)
- 12.00 News (T) (697422)
- 12.05pm The Alphabet Game (5505691)
- 12.30 Going for a Song (741826)
- 12.55 The Weather Show (34958572)
- 1.00 News (T) and weather (60268)
- 1.30 Regional News (69882355)
- 1.40 Neighbours (T) (2051046)
- 2.05 Police Rescue (5762626)
- 2.50 As Time Goes By (T) (5370152)
- 3.20 Well Worth a Visit: Matthew Collins takes a trip to The Old Operating Theatre Museum, built in 1821, where the last amputations without anaesthetics took place (3635299)
- 3.30 Playdays (1260336) 3.50 Chucklevision (1240572) 4.10 Popete and Son (935710) 4.35 The Wild House (698840) 5.00 Newround (T) (7115572)
- 5.10 Blue Box (T) (1005046)
- 5.35 Neighbours (T) (561171)
- 6.00 News (T) and weather (997)
- 6.30 Newsroom South East (249)
- 7.00 Noel's Telly Years: Denis Quilley, the actor, the comedian Barry Cryer and Bev Bevan, drummer of the Move answer questions about events in 1970 (1034).
- 7.30 Tomorrow's World Special edition from Kenya, where farmers have finally outwitted the marauding elephant, baboons have been successfully immunised against pregnancy with a reversible vaccine, and a remarkable woman has saved the country's banana crop from oblivion. With Shahneez Pakravan and Craig Doyle (T) (133).
- 8.00 The National Lottery Live (214341)
- 8.15 25 Years of the Two Ronnies (853442)
- 8.50 Points of View (222330)
- 9.00 News (T) and weather (8581)
- 9.29 National Lottery Update (488336)
- 9.30 **FILM** **Incident**: Drama, with Julia Ford and Ken Christensen. A young drifter arrives at Vemmerup with his sights set firmly on Anna Whibley (434713)
- 10.25 Sportsnight: Desmond Lynam introduces highlights of tonight's FA Cup fifth-round replays. Plus, Nigel Stanser-Smith looks forward to Saturday's five nations rugby union matches — Scotland v Ireland and England v France (1933249)
- 11.55 The Magnificent Seven Riddle (1972) Lee Van Cleef takes over the role made famous by Yul Brynner in this western adventure, as he leads the gunning heroes in another quest — this time to rescue his wife, who has been kidnapped by bandits running riot in a Mexican town. Directed by George McCowan (T) (688152)
- 1.30am Weather (2765737)

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BBC2

- 6.00am Open University: Living with Technology (7372978) 6.50 The Last of the Liberals (224930) 7.15 News (T) (5622336) 7.30 Captain Callum and the Teen Angels (127930) 7.45 News and Breakfast's Gold (T) (7821775) 8.20 Teddy Trucks (857658) 8.35 Spot (1104775) 8.38 The Record (5737670)
- 8.40 Journal (599587) 8.45 Words and Pictures (3877591) 8.48 Playdays (14591) 10.30 104 Calz Eyes (3822624)
- 11.00 Around Scotland (2941201) 11.20 Music Makers (720504) 11.40 Science in Action (229404) 12.00 Spanish Globe (6972065) 12.05pm History File (5558133) 12.30 Working Lunch (35171)
- 1.00 The Geography Programme (1557742) 1.25 Thunderbirds in French (96151249) 1.25 Zig Zag (1555926)
- 1.45 Come Outside (T) (2021204) 2.00 Teddy Trucks (T) 2.05 Spot (T) 2.10 Everyone's Got It (9745742) 3.00 News (T) (7857985) 3.05 Westminster 3.55 News (T) 4.00 Today's the Day (862) 4.30 Ready, Cook (500) 5.00 Esther (9892) 5.30 The Family (560442)
- 5.55 Turning Points (T) (22888)
- 6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation (T) (306978)
- 6.45 Trev and Simon's Transmission Impossible (3545423)
- 7.00 Hancock (bw) (T) (9826)
- 7.30 Counterblasts: A woman who runs a sanctuary for unwanted animals argues that keeping pets is demeaning and should be abolished (T) (775)
- 8.00 University Challenge Queen's University, Belfast, take on Girton College, Cambridge (T) (5048)
- 8.30 Changing Roles (T) (7781)
- 9.00 Modern Times: The first of a new 12-part series looks at the journey of management from Britain in Zimbabwe to the dinner tables of Britain (T) (412065)
- 9.30 **FILM** **A Woman Called Smith** (Elizabeth Smith) (9.50pm)
- 10.00 Coronation Street: Tony's mother arrives at Kevin (Michael Le Vell) and Sally's (Sally Whittaker) with some disturbing news (T) (201)
- 10.30 **FILM** **The Match** (Live Coca-Cola Cup): Semi-Final Coverage of the postponed match between Stockport County and Middlesbrough. Followed by National Lottery result (4881)
- 10.00 News at Ten (T) and weather (33864)
- 10.30 Regional News (T) (450161)
- 10.40 Predator 2 (1990) Violent fantasy thriller. Danny Glover plays a detective who, in hunting the beast becomes its prey. Also with Peter Hall and Gary Bussey. Directed by Stephen Hopkins (3376406)
- 12.40pm Dating the Enemy (8354114)
- 1.40 A Woman with a Past (1992) starring Pamela Reed, Dwight Schultz and Richard Lineback. A seemingly respectable woman is arrested for armed robbery. Directed by Mimi Leder (224293)
- 2.00 The Match (Live Coca-Cola Cup): Semi-Final Coverage of the postponed match between Stockport County and Middlesbrough. Followed by National Lottery result (4881)
- 2.00 Friends (T) (450161)
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- 4.00 Coronation Street (T) (773911)
- 4.30 News (T) (11027)



Elizabeth Smith takes about her role in the House of Lords (T) (363417)

- 10.00 Even Further Aboard: With Jonathan Meades: The Times columnist explores the world of campervanners (T) (785930)
- 10.30 Newsbeat (T) (671671)
- 11.15 This Life (T) (141171)
- 12.00 The Midnight Hour (T) (83244)
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- 4.30 News (T) (11027)

CARTOON NETWORK/TNT

- 9.30 **FILM** **Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace** (1260336) 9.50 **FILM** **Star Wars: Episode II - Attack of the Clones** (1260337) 10.00 **FILM** **Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith** (1260338) 10.30 **FILM** **Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope** (1260339) 11.00 **FILM** **Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back** (1260340) 11.30 **FILM** **Star Wars: Episode VI - Return of the Jedi** (1260341) 12.00 **FILM** **Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens** (1260342) 12.30 **FILM** **Star Wars: Episode VIII - The Last Jedi** (1260343) 1.00 **FILM** **Star Wars: Episode IX - The Rise of Skywalker** (1260344)
- 1.30 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
- 2.00 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
- 2.30 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
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- 12.00 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
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- 1.00 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
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- 2.00 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
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- 4.00 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
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- 5.00 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
- 5.30 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
- 6.00 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
- 6.30 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
- 7.00 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
- 7.30 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
- 8.00 **FILM** **Cartoon Network: The Powerpuff Girls** (1260345)
- 8.30 **FILM** **Cartoon**

**ATHLETICS 45**

Record incentives
pave the way for
Olympic prize money

SPORT

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 26 1997

CRICKET 46

Rival's claims
leave Germion
playing for keeps

**Surgery halts England striker****Shearer pays high price for rushed return**

BY DAVID MADDOCK

IN WHAT was a cruel blow as much for Newcastle United as for the player himself, Alan Shearer went under the surgeon's knife at precisely 3pm yesterday afternoon — kick-off time — to have a corrective operation on his injured groin.

It is the third time the England captain has suffered such an injury within the past eight months and raises the worrying question of how long Newcastle will be without the services of their most important player as they pursue success on two fronts.

Shearer first injured his left groin in April last year, but staged an impressive recovery to lead the England attack during the European championship. Covered in glory after becoming the leading scorer in the tournament and then securing a world-record £15 million move to Newcastle, he soon suffered another setback in October.

This time he pulled his right groin and the prognosis was not good. Doctors predicted he would be absent for at least two months, but Shearer, typically, recovered in half the time. The implication now, though, is that he returned too quickly, because he has damaged the same groin once more.

What is certain is that Shearer will be absent for at least a month and that will be damaging enough. He will miss the UEFA Cup quarter-final tie with AS Monaco and the return leg in France two weeks later. The problem for Newcastle is exacerbated by the fact that Faustino Asprilla, his likely replacement, is suspended for the first leg after he was booked for waving a corner flag while celebrating a goal in the previous round of the competition.



Shearer: operation

Shearer will also be ruled out of several crucial FA Carling Premiership matches, just as Kenny Dalglish, the manager, has placed the club in a challenging position near the top of the table. It is a blow, too, because Dalglish recently sold Paul Kirtson, another reserve forward, to West Ham United for a fee of £2.5 million, and even the dependable Les Ferdinand, Shearer's regular striking partner, is carrying an injury.

Given that he has suffered the same injury within the space of three months, Shearer could be sidelined for far longer and that will surely deal a decisive blow to Newcastle's title chances. He will certainly miss top-of-the-table games against Liverpool and Wimbledon, and a further month's absence would virtually rule him out for the remainder of the campaign.

Such a scenario is likely, given Dalglish's reluctance to gamble with the fitness of a player he recognises as integral to the long-term future of the club.

When Shearer suffered a serious cruciate ligament injury at Blackburn Rovers, he

was restrained from returning — even when he protested his fitness — for nearly a year by a cautious manager: Dalglish.

The operation yesterday was performed by Gerry Gilmore, a celebrated surgeon who has pioneered a technique to deal with a condition that has become known as "Gilmore's Groin". Shearer spent last night in The London Hospital and Gilmore reported no complications.

"Anyone watching Alan Shearer in recent weeks would agree he hasn't looked himself," Graham Courtney, a club spokesman, said last night. "He has been struggling with the injury and in the end we had no option but to send him in for the operation.

"We are hoping that he will be back to fitness very quickly, but it is difficult to say at this stage. He was unlucky to pick up the same injury, but it does happen occasionally. We are just hoping it will not prove too serious."

Shearer suffered the crippling cruciate ligament injury in December 1992 and it was thought that his career was under threat, but it is the groin problem that has caused consistent worry. He recently explained that his natural build, with such powerful thighs, places an undue strain on his groins.

It is not only Newcastle who will wait through the next few weeks with bated breath and crossed fingers.

Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, is resigned to losing his captain for the international with Mexico at the end of next month, but he must fear a longer absence that would rule Shearer out of the World Cup qualifier against Georgia at Wembley in April.

Dalglish has already been active in the transfer market and yesterday approached Liverpool to ask about the availability of Rob Jones, their England defender. He may now be tempted to look for a forward, however, given his limited cover.



Expectancy at Stamford Bridge may be high, but Chelsea's charismatic coach does not feel under immediate pressure to win trophies

Gullit in harmony with the Blues

BY OLIVER HOLT

IT TOOK an hour of hard kneading for a masseur to soothe Ruud Gullit's aching body yesterday lunchtime. Gullit's part in Chelsea reserves' 2-1 defeat by Portsmouth's second team on Monday night had left him with lingering reminders that his playing days are numbered.

His coaching career, though, has only just begun, and when he had finally struggled up the stairs at the training ground near Heathrow airport that the club shares with Imperial College, he took a seat beneath a sporting honours board and treated his listeners to a masterclass in football management instead.

Gullit talked first about how he copes with pressure, the secret of his serenity during matches. "I get rid of my nerves by not watching the game as a supporter," he said. "I watch how our players

behave during the game. I do not follow the ball. I follow their movements. I look to see if the team is in the right shape."

Then the discussion veered from Chelsea's FA Cup fifth-round replay against Leicester City tonight to Dennis Bergkamp's fear of flying. Although when Gullit said about the match at Stamford Bridge was perilously close to the "take-each-game-as-it-comes" mantra trotted out by so many sportsmen, his words had his own peculiar twist of wisdom wrapped around them.

There was no fear of being favourite to win the competition in Gullit's words, but he made it plain that his hopes for the future and his own peace of mind do not rest so much on winning trophies as they do in improving his players.

"I do not think about the end of the season and about what we might have won or what we might not have won," he said. "I watch how our players

said. "I do not live that particular way. I have both feet on the ground and I want to keep them on the ground. Everywhere I have played I have won trophies, but that was because I worked very hard."

"

"I know there will always be pressure to win trophies, but I am used to living with that. It seems to be more of a problem:

Stockport pitch in _____
Ogrizovic's law _____
Pearce's cash flow _____

for other people than it is for me because I live from week to week."

"I am not satisfied yet with what I have done at Chelsea. I just want to get better and better and better, and what the result of that will be I do not know. But before I became coach, I think there was more talent in the team than maybe they showed, and the change in the players is what I am

most proud of. They are doing things now that they did not know they had in them."

"I just want to keep doing things in my own way, in the way I have been doing them throughout my career. Chelsea wanted me to do this job and it took me quite a while to think about it. But it is a great opportunity to get experience and it is too early for people to be saying: 'Do you feel you have to win trophies?'"

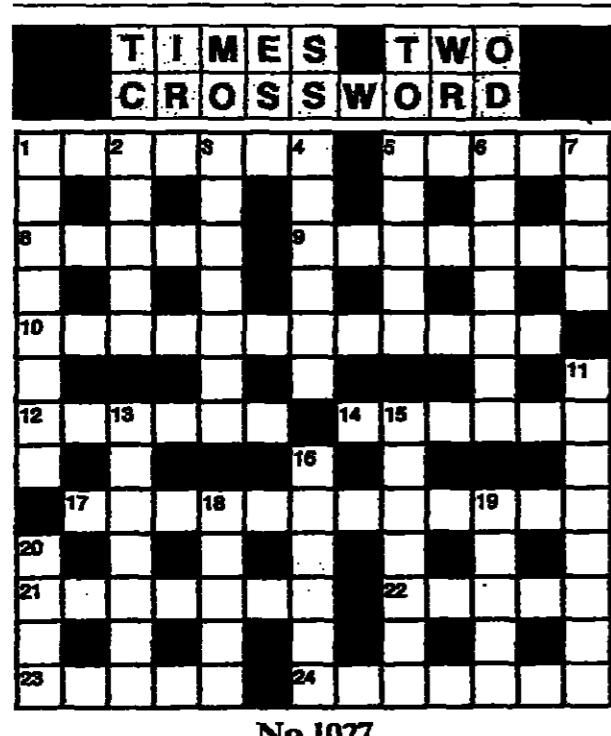
After taking a two-goal lead at Elstree Street ten days ago, Chelsea allowed Leicester to creep back into the game and force a draw, but their spirits were revitalised by their pulsating FA Carling Premiership match with Manchester United in west London on Saturday and Gullit says that he is content with the way the team is evolving.

"I am happy with the progress we have made," he said. "The interest in our team when we go away from home speaks for itself. The stadiums are always crowded. People

come to see Chelsea because something always happens at our games now and that is a good feeling."

"It is having a snowball effect, too. I think a lot of people do not realise just how much football fans in Europe are talking about Chelsea. I see television programmes from all over the Continent and they talk a lot about Chelsea. It means that the players are doing something that impresses people. It is the players, too, not me."

Finally, he dismissed suggestions that he might have fired up the Leicester players by suggesting that they were lucky to take the tie to a replay, courtesy of Eddie Newton's late own goal. He said that he had just been telling the truth. And when he was asked if he had been concentrating on anything in particular in training, he had an answer ready. "We have been working on kicking the ball away instead of into our own net," he said.



ACROSS
1 Jug; baseball-player (?)
5 Important person; ski
8 mound (5)
8 Change (5)
9 W E Jones' flying hero (?)
10 We shall see eventually (4,4)
12 Latin verbal noun; on the back (6)
14 Sailor on land (6)
17 Remain imperturbable (3,4,4)
21 Yellowstone Park state (?)
22 Feast children's comic (5)
23 One from Salomón (5)
24 Highest percentage rank (7)

SOLUTION TO NO 1026
ACROSS: 1 Derogatory, 2 Vilein, 3 Drake, 4 Trio, 5 Rebrates, 6 20 Ascor, 7 21 Placido, 8 22 Lederhosen, 9 23 Vouge, 10 24 About, 11 25 Retraces, 12 Head, 13 Verbal, 14 Handsome, 15 Scence, 16 Reparte, 17 28 Frees, 18 29 Lens, 19 Mash.

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 1022
In association with BRITISH MIDLAND

ACROSS: 1 Discharge, 2 Mad, 3 Fulcrum, 4 Risen, 5 Nap, 6 Handiness, 7 Scence, 8 14 Island, 9 17 Vice, 10 18 Frees, 11 20 Lens, 12 21 Placido, 13 22 Rod, 14 23 Lens.

DOWNS: 1 Defence, 2 Self-possessed, 3 Hurl, 4 Rumpus, 5 Ernest, 6 Mismanagement, 7 Dingy, 8 Betrayal, 9 Display, 10 Deepen, 11 Water, 12 Urge.

1st PRIZE of a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND'S domestic or international network is D Stirling, Blanfield.
2nd PRIZE of a return ticket to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND'S domestic network is D Clarkson, Ackworth, Pontefract, West Yorkshire.
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Scotland identify Tait as answer to midfield riddle

BY MARK SOISTER

NINE years after he left Scotland and rugby union, Alan Tait's career came full circle yesterday when he was named in the Scotland team to play Ireland in the five nations' championship on Saturday. Tait, 32, will win his ninth cap, at outside centre, in a side that shows six changes, four of them positional, from that which succumbed to England at Twickenham on February 1.

Having been included in the provisional squad last week, it was no surprise that Tait was confirmed yesterday in the starting XV. Such has been the impact of former rugby league players in Wales that Tait is unrealistically being seen by some as an instant panacea for Scotland's ills. Rob Wainwright, the Scotland captain, tried to play down expectations. "We are looking for a steady game from Alan. We are not looking for some messiah," he said.

Tait, who was capped 14 times by the Great Britain rugby league team during his playing days at Widnes and Leeds,

FIVE NATIONS'**SCOTLAND**

R J S Shepherd (Middlesbrough): A G Steer, 1 Tait, 2 Roverson, 3 P J Tomlinson, 4 C M Chisholm, 5 K M Lovell, 6 C M Chisholm (Middlesbrough), 8 W Redden, 9 Mccoll, 10 T J Smith (Warrington), 12 G M Currie, 13 M J Stewart (Warrington), 14 B W Williams (Warrington), 15 G Armstrong (Middlesbrough), 16 D F Green (Aldershot), 17 D W Hilton (Bath), 18 Brothman (Leeds).

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 1022

In association with BRITISH MIDLAND

ACROSS: 1 Discharge, 2 Mad, 3 Fulcrum, 4 Risen, 5 Nap, 6 Handiness, 7 Scence, 8 14 Island, 9 17 Vice, 10 18 Frees, 11 20 Lens, 12 21 Placido, 13 22 Rod, 14 23 Lens.

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Gianville, the captain, is optimistic that his turned ankle is on the mend. Tait is aware that, after his players scored 87 points in two matches, public expectation will be high. He said: "French rugby has been re-launched under Jean-Claude Skrela and Pierre Villepreux and they will not be constrained mentally by playing England, as they have been for a number of years."

Maguire to miss out on Festival

BY OUR RACING STAFF

ADRIAN MAGUIRE will miss his third Cheltenham Festival in a row after breaking his right arm at Leicester yesterday. He was kicked on the ground after taking a heavy fall from Foxwolds Valley, trained by his employer, David Nicholson, at the second fence of the Rutland Water Novices' Chase.

Maguire was immediately picked up by the racecourse ambulance and taken to Leicester Royal Infirmary for X-rays.

Townsend partners Tait in a revamped midfield, the fifth different centre pairing Scotland have fielded this season. To accommodate Tait, Tony Stanger reverts to the right wing. David Johnston, the backs coach, said: "We now believe we have a combination that will perform."

Lack of selectorial consistency cannot have helped Scotland's cause this season. Twenty-six different players have been capped to date, yet the right blind is still proving elusive. Once again it is the three-quarters who have carried the can for the disappointing results. The pack, which, according to Richie Dixon, the coach, "performed creditably at Twickenham", is retained en bloc. The only change a positional one, is in the back row, where Peter Walton and Rob Wainwright switch places. Wainwright returns to blind-side flanker, his preferred position, with Walton at No 8 for the first time in an international.

□ Nick Popplewell, the Newcastle prop, has withdrawn from the Ireland team with a hamstring strain. His replacement will be announced today.

Gianville, the captain, is optimistic that his turned ankle is on the mend. Tait is aware that, after his players scored 87 points in two matches, public expectation will be high. He said: "French rugby has been re-launched under Jean-Claude Skrela and Pierre Villepreux and they will not be constrained mentally by playing England, as they have been for a number of years."

MORSE**Safe Deposit Box**

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